

INSIGHT

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THE TRIBUNE B

CALIFORNIA

Push for
quake
safety
may hit
a wallTax credits for
seismic retrofitting
face a hurdle:
Gov. Jerry BrownBy PETER JAMISON
Los Angeles Times

After decades of false starts and stumbling progress, California cities' efforts to strengthen buildings that could collapse in a massive earthquake may take a leap forward in coming weeks, as Gov. Jerry Brown considers legislation offering generous subsidies to property owners for seismic retrofitting.

The bill, which would use tax credits to offset 30 percent of the cost of improvements to vulnerable buildings, will reach Brown's desk at a critical moment. City officials in San Francisco and Los Angeles have made the retrofitting of shaky buildings a priority. In Los Angeles, Mayor Eric Garcetti has proposed what would be the most expansive citywide retrofitting requirement in the state's history.

But after passing out of the state Senate on a 37-1 vote this month following unanimous approval by the Assembly, the bill still has another, potentially severe, challenge to overcome: the scrutiny of a governor whose fiscal instincts have repeatedly foiled the best intentions of legislators, including those in his own party.

Brown often speaks of himself as a steward for California, and has not hesitated to throw money and political capital behind projects — such as the high-speed rail line — that he deems integral to the state's future.

At the same time, he has repeatedly shown a hawkish streak when it comes to state finances. And some observers in the state capital say he has been particularly skeptical of tax credits, viewing them in general as poor fiscal policy.

"Legislators like to use the tax structure to do things, and this governor hasn't on the whole been all that interested," said Fred Silva, a senior policy advisor at the think tank California Forward. "He's a steward of the state's fiscal structure,

See RETROFITTING, B3

A LOOK AT OFFSHORE ENERGY



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Floating offshore wind turbines have been in development since the mid-2000s. This turbine was installed in 2009 in Norway.

In the wind

Wind farms in waters off the California coast could get their start in Morro Bay if one energy company's vision for 100 floating turbines 15 miles offshore comes to fruition

By STEPHANIE FINUCANE | sfinucane@thetribunenews.com

In a generation or two, offshore wind farms could be as common along the California coast as offshore oil rigs are today. And Morro Bay could be the community where the offshore wind industry gets its start in the Golden State.

Trident Winds LLC has approached the city of Morro Bay with a proposal to install about 100 floating turbines 15 miles offshore. It's a 1,000-megawatt project that would produce enough energy to power 150,000 households. The turbines would rise 360 to 400 feet above sea level, would cover about 63 square miles and would be spaced about half-a-mile apart.

The company is negotiating with the city for use of the outfall line at the northeast side of Morro Rock. A transmission cable would run from the wind farm through the pipeline and on to the Morro Bay Power Plant switchyard, which is connected to the state power grid.

Morro Bay was chosen both for its constant offshore winds and because the existing infrastructure minimizes the onshore work that would be required.

"We would literally have no disturbance on the beach at all," said Alla Weinstein, a co-founder of Trident Energy.

She was involved with a similar pilot project approved in Coos Bay, Ore. That's the first project on the West Coast, though there are others planned on the East Coast and one — a 30-megawatt, five-turbine project — is under construction off Cape Cod.

While the United States is just starting to embrace the technology, offshore wind farms already are powering homes and businesses in Europe, where there are an estimated 160 offshore farms either in operation, under construction or in the planning stage.

Those differ from the wind farms planned for the West Coast, though.

In most cases, wind turbines (what we often refer to as windmills) are fixed to the ocean floor in Europe, as well as on the East Coast of the United States.

See WIND, B3

COMMENTARY



Jean Kim is a writer and clinical assistant professor of psychiatry at George Washington University.

After 9/11, patients lied to me all the time

The first time I heard a patient mention a relative who died in the World Trade Center attacks on 9/11, I felt the expected hushed sadness, the sore sorrow of what we were all still recovering from a complexed, though, prior. I was a little perplexed, though, at the person's lack of emotion and matter-of-factness, but dismissed it. I knew, even as a fledgling psychiatric trainee in Manhattan, that everyone grieved in their own style, and I jotted down the information for his file. The second time a pa-

tient told me about a 9/11 death, and then the third, with similar blankness, often accompanied by other major problems, such as homelessness, drug abuse or depression, I started to wonder. I can recall at least 10 similar instances of people saying they had a sibling, a son, a cousin or parents who had died in the attack.

Yes, it was a historic, cataclysmic mass murder that claimed 3,000 lives, but New York was a huge city with millions of people. I could understand people saying they lived near the buildings, witnessed the horrible

collapse, inhaled the burning chemical toxic smoke afterward or even that they knew survivors. I went on a date with a guy who had just missed being on the flight that crashed in Pennsylvania. So coincidences weren't impossible.

But oftentimes the stories didn't hold up. One had a tale about a young child recovering in a burn unit, but the hospital he was at kept changing each time she told it. When I called the most recent hospital she'd mentioned, they had no record of her son. Another patient claimed to have had parents

on one of the planes that crashed, but later admitted it wasn't true. My cynicism started to creep forth. I began calling it to myself the "9/11 sign" — anyone with a report of a 9/11 death in their history was likely seeking some sort of secondary gain, at best in the form of greater sympathy in the face of a multitude of other tough psychosocial stressors in their lives, or at worst, to get controlled substances or even to apply for special 9/11 benefits.

See KIM, B3

'It's clean energy and more consistent than solar. Wind is available 24 hours per day.'

— Alla Weinstein, a co-founder of Trident Energy

Wind

From Page B1

On the West Coast, the ocean is too deep for that. The turbines will float on the surface of the water, where they'll bob up and down with the waves, much as an anchored ship does.

None of this will happen quickly, though, at least not in California.

It took 2½ years for the Coos Bay project to get through the permitting process, Weinstein said. She estimates it could take as long as five years to make it through California's permitting process, since there are state regulatory agencies involved, including the California Coastal Commission and the State Lands Commission.

Trident has been laying the groundwork. In addition to meeting with the city of Morro Bay, it's been working with two groups that have a big stake in the issue: commercial fishermen and the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, which is seeking marine sanctuary status for the offshore area. It's trying to meet with Dynegey, which still owns the shuttered Morro Bay Power Plant.

Trident also plans to sponsor a public meeting to introduce the project, possibly in late October or early November.

The applicants stress that the wind farms are key to reducing reliance on fossil fuels.

"It's clean energy and more consistent than solar," Weinstein said. "Wind is available 24 hours per day."

Andrew Christie, executive director of the local chapter of the Sierra Club, was in agreement about the benefits of wind farms: "We're all for them. It's a great component of getting



The visual impact of wind turbines has been a concern, but at 15 miles or more offshore, the turbines proposed at Morro Bay wouldn't be visible from the beach. Above, a WindFloat by Principle Power and, right, an MES 2MW from Hitachi.

COURTESY PHOTOS



off fossil fuels."

But as with all projects, there is a caveat: "It's all about location and environmental sensitivity," Christie said.

Bird and bat kill has been one of the big concerns about both onshore and offshore wind farms.

A peer-reviewed study issued last summer estimated turbines kill as many as 368,000 birds annually in North America, according

to an article in USA Today, though the newspaper also noted that cats kill between 1.4 billion and 3.7 billion birds per year.

But it isn't just the inad-

vertent loss-taking of birds that's an issue. According to BirdLife International, offshore wind farms have caused migrating birds to change their routes. That

can mean having to travel greater distances, which can affect the survival rates of hatchlings.

In response, there have been increasing calls for tur-

bines designed to deter birds, as well as for locating wind farms outside of bird migration zones.

Weinstein said the turbines planned for Morro Bay will be safer for birds than older-model turbines. For one thing, the blades rotate more slowly in newer models, she said.

Visual impact has been another concern, but at 15 miles or more off shore, the turbines off the Morro Bay coastline won't be visible from the beach.

Cost is another consideration: Wind power is often much more expensive than other types of energy. That's been a sticking point with some potential customers.

"It's nuts to spend all this money on power at three or more times the going cost," was a comment that a Boston Globe reader offered in response to news that the \$2.6 billion Cape Wind project off the coast of Massachusetts had stalled.

Weinstein declined to give a cost estimate for the Morro Bay project, though she said it's quite different from the Cape Wind project, so the two should not be compared.

She also pointed out that Morro Bay's project is so many years into the future, it's "basically impossible to answer the question today."

As proponents of wind power point out, the objective isn't to produce power as cheaply as possible — it's to reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

"Cape Wind may not be cost-effective in the short term," was the comment from another Boston Globe reader. "But, it is essential that Cape Wind and other projects in New England like it move forward so that New England can have a reliable and sustainable future in clean energy and once again be the guiding light for the rest of the nation."

Retrofitting

From Page B1

and he has been from the beginning."

Brown spokeswoman Deborah Hoffman declined to comment on the retrofitting bill, AB 428. The governor has until Oct. 11 to take action on the measure — by signing or vetoing it, or letting it become law without his signature.

Proposed by Assemblyman Adrin Nazarian, a Sherman Oaks Democrat, the bill has gone largely unnoticed in a legislative session consumed by debate over topics such as drones, climate change, vaccine regulations and aid-in-dying treatment.

But earthquake safety advocates say the legislation would be a milestone in what has long been an intractable area of public policy. Although not a panacea, they say, Nazarian's bill is a big step toward addressing the Achilles' heel of retrofitting proposals: property owners' reluctance to open

their wallets.

"These are giant steps forward in that fight that's been going on for decades now about retrofits," said former L.A. City Councilman Greig Smith, who tried unsuccessfully to advance retrofitting regulations before leaving office in 2011. Previous efforts, he said, have all gotten hung up on the financing question.

"We get into that back-and-forth fight over whose responsibility is what," Smith said. "And that's where it always bogs down."

Should Brown choose to veto the seismic tax credit, it would be a blow for Garcetti, whose proposed retrofitting mandate might not win the L.A. City Council's approval without a means of softening its financial impact. In January of last year, Councilman Mitchell Englander, who supports Garcetti's plan, said it would be "political suicide" to require retrofits without offering financial assistance to building owners.

In a statement, Garcetti said the proposed tax credit was a "much-needed tool ...

LATEST ON RETROFITTING IN SAN LUIS OBISPO

A dozen years after the San Simeon Earthquake prompted San Luis Obispo officials to move up deadlines for seismically strengthening 126 unreinforced masonry buildings mostly in the historic downtown area, only eight buildings still need to be retrofitted.

Of the eight buildings — all located downtown — six retrofitting projects are under construction or nearly complete.

— Tribune staff report

rewarding building owners willing to complete life saving seismic retrofits with some financial relief."

Officials have known about the dangers of quake-vulnerable buildings for decades, but concerns about costs thwarted earlier efforts in Los Angeles to identify and require property owners to retrofit their buildings.

More than 1,000 concrete buildings, as well as wooden structures with weak first

floors, across the city may be at risk of collapsing in a big earthquake. Sixteen people were killed when one such building pancaked in the 1994 Northridge earthquake. City officials say there are at least 12,000 of these "soft-story" structures in Los Angeles.

This year, Garcetti joined the mayors of San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley and Santa Monica in signing a letter of support for AB 428 addressed to the chairman of the Senate budget committee.

Others, although supportive of the bill, say it is imperfect.

David Cocke, president of the structural engineering firm Structural Focus and a spokesman for the Structural Engineers Association of Southern California, said the bill "certainly is a positive step forward, and it's better than nothing." But he said it has notable shortcomings.

He pointed out that AB 428 could create inconsistent standards of earthquake safety across the state, because it would allow

individual cities to determine which buildings — from mobile homes to office buildings — qualify for the tax credits. And he said the bill's annual funding cap of \$12 million would be insufficient to retrofit large concrete buildings, which can cost more than \$1 million each to strengthen, on a wide scale.

The tax credit also would not go into effect until 2017, which could delay retrofitting efforts, Cocke said.

Assemblyman Mike Gatto, a Glendale Democrat, voted for the bill this year after chairing the committee where an earlier version of the bill died last year. He said that while he admired Nazarian's goals, retrofitting subsidies are a tough sell for Californians who see them as giving money to the coastal cities that have more aggressively pursued earthquake preparation than smaller cities.

"The seismic retrofitting, for better or for worse, is largely an issue that people see as a San Francisco and Los Angeles issue," Gatto

said. "Obviously, this does nothing for Joshua Tree. This does very little for San Diego and Fresno."

Lenny Goldberg of the California Tax Reform Association, which opposes AB 428, said that the bill, which would offer tax credits on a first-come, first-served basis, isn't a rational approach to funding retrofits.

"We don't know whether we're dealing with those who are most in need or those who have sharp tax lawyers," Goldberg said.

Nazarian said he knows the bill has shortcomings, but that it is intended as a "foot in the door" that could lead to more comprehensive policies. But he said that even an "imperfect" law could save lives and property in the event of a devastating earthquake, and that the state has an unusual window for action because of its budget surplus.

"I'm hoping that those points all are weighed by the governor," Nazarian said, "given that we're at a time when we can be making these investments."

Kim

From Page B1

So I was not shocked to hear comedian and actor Steve Rannazzisi reveal he lied about having escaped the twin towers that day.

I also wasn't shocked by the otherwise outrageous tale of Tania Head (Alicia Esteve Head), the former president of the World Trade Center Survivors Network who wasn't even in the United States during the attacks but maintains she was one of the few who had escaped above the floor directly hit by a plane.

We can't know Rannazzisi's exact motive for lying (indeed, he claims to not know either), but his lie does seem to have helped jump-start his career, if only by setting him apart.

In psychiatry, we classify the older concept of "pathological lying" into two main camps: conscious versus unconscious motivation for lying. Patients are clearly aware of the

lying itself and highly manipulative in their actions, but their motivations for doing so can vary.

Conscious lying, termed "malingering" in psychiatry, is known more commonly as "con man" behavior and is sometimes related to antisocial personality disorder. It's done for clear and conscious secondary gain, usually monetary, such as disability payments, drugs or "three hots and a cot" — for homeless people who in desperation lie about being suicidal to get admitted to a hospital.

Rannazzisi seems to fall into this category, because his claims helped get attention to spark his budding acting and comedic career after he moved to Los Angeles shortly after the attacks. He continued to make claims about escaping the towers in interviews as recently as 2009.

You also have the "unconsciously" motivated liars suffering from factitious disorders, in which

people feign symptoms, either mental or physical, in order to play "the sick role."

One extreme form of this disorder is Munchausen syndrome, in which a person, sometimes with some education or training in health sciences, intentionally falsifies medical illness in themselves, or worse, in their children, in order to receive care and attention. Milder forms of factitious disorder include people who develop pseudoseizures, paralyzed limbs or other somatic issues, often manifesting from underlying hidden trauma or unspeakable emotions.

There is also "pseudologia fantastica," literally fantasy fake words, where people feel compelled to rattle off extremely detailed, fantastical stories about themselves that are untrue.

The "unconscious" motivation usually is related to strong unmet needs during childhood development,

such as neglect or abuse, leading to an ongoing drive to seek forms of care and affection even in self-destructive or manipulative ways. It seems Tania Head might fall into this category, because she reportedly came from a very wealthy and noted family in Spain; she had no real need for money when she advocated for survivors. She developed a close cadre of fellow survivor friends. But there is the issue of fame.

Sept. 11 was a game-changer for the American psyche and as such, might have become a lightning rod for the particular "sympathy" lies it garnered. No other event has inspired so many false claims among my patients. And people of all stripes and socioeconomic classes seemed to sense the power lurking behind that type of attention, that kind of historic relevancy. It's the power of infamy.

For the true victims of the attacks and their bereaved, the reverence and

awe is, to me, fully justified. There was also something elegiac and beautiful about the way Americans came together those shocked and mournful weeks after the attacks, something in our character we didn't know we had.

But the dark side of that awe and reverence are people who wish to ride the coattails of that sympathy, and the ennobling force of people's generosity. We shouldn't necessarily just feel enraged by these individuals (although it certainly is tempting.)

These are usually ultimately sad, lonely, empty people who capitalize on this unprecedented capacity for charity. And maybe there is something to be said for how our individualistic society does leave many neglected souls to grow up unsupported and desperate, in emotionally and financially broken families and environments.

That our period of momentary closeness quickly dissipated into our regular

grumbling, busy, self-centered ways, leaving these lost souls at the edges to clamor for these scraps of love and support. Fame, as found by Head and Rannazzisi, is a quick, powerful way to garner that love and support.

To his credit, Rannazzisi has come clean at great cost to his reputation and appears in his statements to exhibit remorse.

Typically malingering and factitious lying, either from outright sociopaths or from factitious patients who exhibit the classic symptom of "la belle indifference," does not come with much insight or regret.

"For many years, more than anything," Rannazzisi said in a statement, "I have wished that, with silence, I could somehow erase a story told by an immature young man. It only made me more ashamed."

For him, perhaps the pull of fame was too much for a young guy looking for his big break. 9/11 was the sure thing.