



## MY BEST SHOT

by Lisa Ross

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### COUNTY SUPERVISOR SENT TO THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

When you don't play well with the other kids in the sandbox, eventually someone uses their shovel in bad ways. And that's apparently what happened to County Supervisor Pam Slater who now represents our coastal communities and the SR56 corridor from outside the playground.

Slater, the staunchest advocate for community and environmental concerns on the County Board of Supervisors, was chased off several powerful regional boards like SANDAG (San Diego Association of Governments), the County Water Authority and the North County Transit Board by new chair Bill Horn, apparently with permission from other kids on the Board rumored to be unhappy with her relationship skills.

If the palace intrigue at the Board of Supervisors seems remote, consider that SANDAG makes funding decisions for 75 percent of the state's transportation dollars for the region, amounting to billions of dollars, and where the roads go, so does development. And so goes railway double tracking through Del Mar and several sensitive lagoons.

Supervisor Bill Horn, who now takes Slater's place at SANDAG, is a "flat-earther" representing the northeast part of the county who ran prayer services on County time and whose views on property rights, open space and endangered habitat make Bush's Interior Secretary appointee Gale Norton look like John Muir.

There simply isn't a Supervisor more out of touch with this community's sensibilities in regard to quality of life issues, nor one more antagonistic to smart growth strategies than Bill Horn.

For example, Horn supported a regional mega-shopping center next to the Solana Beach train station instead of a village-styled mixed-use retail development favored by the community, and he continues to oppose sprawl prevention land-use policies in the unincorporated parts of the county.

Slater's hard line opposition to building highways through habitat preserves while serving on the SANDAG board played a significant role in saving Los Penasquitos Canyon from destructive bridges, but ran up against Bill Horn's love of the road last year. Horn's connections to the Farm Bureau are as welcomed by environmentalists, Slater's base of support, as the NRA is with gun control advocates.

But, sending Slater to her room had as much to do with simmering bad blood with other board members as ideological differences with Horn. Last fall, simmering turned to boiling after she publicly derided Supervisors Cox and Roberts by characterizing their Clean Water Conference as "tardy," scolding them for being previously absent on the issue. Publicly tying colleagues' shoelaces together rarely gets one picked for the team.

Slater's ouster from these key transportation and resource boards puts San Diego city communities most effected by decisions about habitat preservation, clean water and SR56 on the outside of key regional decision and policy making bodies, because the City of San Diego will not be represented by council members from the SR56 corridor. This is not good.

One casualty in this game of musical chairs could be funding for the SR56 northbound connectors. Despite the parochial interests of 17 other SANDAG board members who couldn't care less about whether SR56 functions when it opens, Slater made sure that the northbound connectors to I-5 and I-15 remained high on the SANDAG funding priority list.

With SANDAG key to so many critical decisions for our area, we may all soon wish that the Supervisors had sent Pam Slater to the Principal's office instead of expelling her.