

# CALI-PHONY-A

CALIFORNIA DREAMIN' HAS BECOME A NIGHTMARE.

BY LEE PITTS

**C**alifornia: Have you lost your ever-loving mind? I used to be proud to tell people I am a fifth-generation Californian, but now I try to hide the fact because you've turned California Dreamin' into a nightmare. Or a bad joke. Your roads are terrible and your schools are worse. Common decency and courtesy? Forget it. There's human feces on the sidewalks of San Francisco where the median price for a crappy home is a million and a half, and the typical driver on our freeways is texting with one hand, drinking a five-dollar cup of Starbucks with another and flipping you off with yet another. That doesn't leave many other hands to drive the car.

I know what part of the problem is. You went from an economy that was largely based on agriculture and oil to one ruled by bits and bytes. Needless to say, each attracts its own kind of people. Your Central Valley is still the biggest agricultural phenomenon in the world but the WOOFY's—well-off older folks who live on the coast and either work for the government or are retired from it or are professors who teach communism at universities—are trying to shut off farmers' water so that they'll have enough to fill their hot tubs and swimming pools, to water their lawns and succulent gardens, and to save the fairy shrimp. You kicked cows off the land because they supposedly drank too much water and in their place planted wine grapes and marijuana farms which are sucking our aquifers dry. Self-driving cars can't come too soon because a large percentage of your drivers are either drunk on wine or stoned on grass.

You shut down offshore oil wells because they're unsightly. I guess you think huge windmills and solar arrays are pretty to look at as you cruise by in your Smart cars, not once wondering where the power that charged your batteries came from. Many of you snobs in California who have bumper stickers on your Priuses and Teslas saying "Tear down the dams" have no idea that without hydroelectric power you'd run out of "gas" at the most inconvenient times. And has anyone figured out yet what you're gonna do with all the old

used-up batteries and solar panels, or are you just gonna store them alongside your spent radioactive nuclear fuel rods?

I feel like I'm living in a loony bin or never-never land and it didn't used to be this way. When California was an economic juggernaut you used to have commonsense leaders. Ronald Reagan was your governor, for gosh sakes! But uncontrolled illegal immigration and the growth of tech has turned you into an insane asylum. You liberals adopted a hands-off policy in your forests and then wonder why you have an annual conflagration season

where entire towns are burned to the ground and the smoke doesn't clear until November. Californians are such hypocrites. You think cow farts are contributing to your precious global-warming theory but the smoke that darkens our sky from forest fires doesn't?

I can't even keep up with all the rules and regulations you're passing. You can't build a home on your own property that you pay huge property taxes on if you find a certain snail there, and my friend had to get a permit that cost \$137 just to cut down a *dead* tree on his own property! Another acquaintance is in a tizzy because his pine trees have grown so high they're blocking his solar panels but the county won't let him cut down his own trees. You have the highest taxes in the country and high-earning people are leaving the state in droves, so what did politicians in Sacramento do? You passed a law to tax ex-Californians' income if they live in another state but spend 60 days of the year here. And your most recent scheme to pay \$600 to everyone in the state *including* illegal aliens would bankrupt you...if you weren't bankrupt already.

They say that trends start in California and are followed by other states. If that's the case, to my fellow Californians might I suggest moving to another country? Like Texas.

Sincerely,

An ashamed Californian. ■

*Lee Pitts lives in Los Osos, Calif. For more of his work, go to [www.LeePittsbooks.com](http://www.LeePittsbooks.com) or call 1-800-RANGE-4-U (726-4348).*

**Our ag and oil economy is now ruled by bits and bytes.**