

Submitter: John Weigant  
On Behalf Of: The Future  
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1586

Please table SB 1586. It's based on obsolete thinking that many still believe. I'm John Weigant, a futurist and climate activist. I've been a naval officer, physics teacher, urban planner, software developer, business owner, and world wide teacher of software development techniques to software engineers. My MUP thesis project wrote software to project future populations. I understand population growth and information dynamics.. My personal specialty is how people think.

The Bible's Ecclesiastes said, 2500 years ago, "there is nothing new under the sun." It defined Conservatism: look backwards, repeat what worked; avoid what didn't. In those early farming times, many children profited families. Growth was good. Eventually (1687), Isaak Newton published that mass, energy, and momentum are "conserved." They can change form (downward), but not amount. Other physical things also have limits, like time, space, and the speed of light. These keep us Earthbound. Change is now so fast that Conservatism is an obsolete world view. If you are Conservative, it's time to look ahead, not back. Violating the laws of physics never works in the long run.

In 1776, three events started the Industrial Age. Our Declaration of Independence resulted in balanced democracy. Adam Smith wrote The Wealth of Nations, defining capitalism, an economic system based on perpetual growth. James Watt installed the first rotary steam engine, opening a new source of energy: heat from coal. This industry, converting raw materials to useful products, produced so much pollution it began to change the climate.

In 1948, Claude Shannon's mathematical theory information started the Information Age, coupled with computers to process it. In 1972, a seminal study, THE LIMITS TO GROWTH, used Systems Dynamics with computer modeling to project growth ahead 125 years. A dozen scenarios of growth choices projected basic variables, like population and pollution, ahead each year, until 2100. The most probable scenarios showed population would peak in the 2020s, then drop in half by 2100, with the quality of life plunging.

It's happening now. On every continent except Africa, where it's dropping fast, the fertility rate is below the replacement rate of 2.1 children per woman of child-bearing age. This is no fad; it recognizes that raising children in this Information Age now requires so much information that parents can afford to educate only one child to become economically self-sufficient. Children are now economic liabilities. Couples also delay kids until they themselves are educated. SB 1586 assumes the economy will keep growing, and population with it. It will not, and especially if immigration is discouraged.

Example: "China's population peaked at 1.43 billion in 2021 and began declining in 2022. [...] China recorded more deaths than births for the first time in 2022 with a

net decrease of 850,000 and ... in 2023 ...by more than 1 million and in 2024 ... by 1.4 million. The ... United Nations assumes China's total fertility rate will rise from 1.0 in 2023 to 1.35 by 2100, project[ing] its population to fall to 639 million by 2100, a decline of about 54%." --Trimmed Wikipedia quote (2/15/26)

The laws of physics that limit growth can be sidestepped by replacing quantity with quality. The information embedded in things is a measure of their quality. Information can be described as named patterns, and it appears they have no limit. So QUALITY can grow, even if quantity can't. It just requires people to change their frame of reference from bigger to better. And better for all is all we really want. BUT IT MUST BE SUSTAINABLE.

SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE. Development is now so fast that we are drawing down Earth's resources faster than Nature can restore them. In short, SB 1586 attempts to violate the laws of physics. In the long run, that can't happen. Vote no on SB 1586. --John Weigant