

# OPINION

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The Inland Valley Daily Bulletin welcomes letters to the editor. Letters must include your **name, address and a daytime telephone number**. All letters subject to editing. Those more than **300 words** will not be considered. Please limit submissions to one a month.

INLAND VALLEY  
**Daily Bulletin**

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## SACRAMENTO

# Must enforce vacation cap

If Gov. Jerry Brown hopes to have any chance of garnering enough legislative support for tax increases and extensions, his administration must do a better job of managing the state's business than has been done in the past.

The latest flap over wasteful governmental practices concerns state government managers' failure to enforce the limit on accumulating vacation times by public employees.

State workers are not supposed to save up more than 80 days of vacation, which is far more permissive than in the private sector, where a maximum of 30 days of vacation accumulation is common. Many other states have far more strict limits than California's 80 days or 640 hours. New York, for example, has a limit of 300 hours of saved vacation. Oregon's cap is 350 hours, New Mexico's is 240 hours.

Despite the generous 80-day cap, thousands of state employees have been allowed to accumulate far more days than the limit.

A prison doctor was allowed to pile up 2 1/2 years of vacation and cashed it out for \$594,976, when he retired. An administrator for the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection saved a similar amount of time and received \$294,440 upon retirement.

These are not isolated examples. Of about 14,000 full-time employees who took a lump-sum payment for unused vacation time when they left their jobs last year, 29 percent received checks for more than 80 days' pay.

## THE MAIL

### Station has benefits

It was nice to see a true perspective in the Daily Bulletin on the transfer station proposal for Pomona ("Waste station translates into jobs," by Bishop Eddie Banales, May 23). The real benefits of this proposal are something that Pomona should not pass up. Pomona has long been bereft of much new economic activity, and consequently it suffers from a chronic shortage of city revenues and from budget cutbacks.

This fine proposal brings much-needed revenue to our city in a clean and well-thought-out approach. We are also not creating a city of "trash" with this facility. We are getting rid of a nasty open air "transfer station" that no one seems to be protesting at this time, and replacing it with a state-of-the-art facility!

We are getting a jump on what will be required of all the cities in Southern California in the very near future, with landfills closing all around us, and the problem of trash (and what to do with it) becoming a very major and more expensive proposal to all the cities in Southern California.

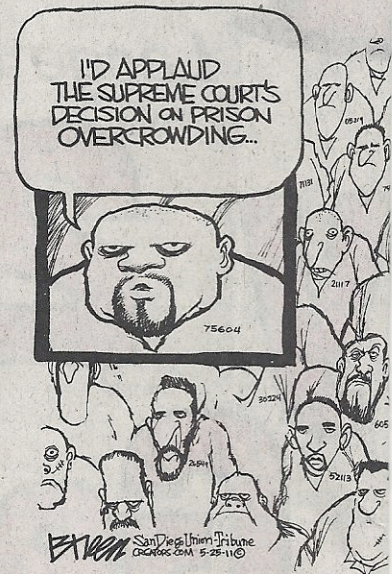
Many of these facilities are in the planning stages or have been built in other cities; if we don't build it, someone else will and we will be paying them to haul our trash away! Let's not be shortsighted about this crucial project and lose sight of what eventually we all as cities have to deal with.

We can then use the much-needed revenue to improve the safety of our city and make Pomona a better place to live. I urge our city to show true leadership, and not put it off again.

**RON VANDER MOLEN**  
Pomona

### Save troops' lives

Defense Secretary Robert Gates' wise warning not to let our victories against bin Laden and al-Qaida lure us into slashing defense spending couldn't come at a more important moment. In its haste to reduce the federal deficit through budget cuts, Congress' challenge will be to avoid repeating the body scandal of the Iraq



War by protecting funding for life-saving troop equipment while trimming waste and unnecessary bureaucracy.

Which programs should Congress save? In addition to funding for armored troop vehicles, our soldiers need the kind of new technology provided by the Army's Brigade Combat Team Modernization program (BCTM), which will soon deliver a combat-ready wireless network and surveillance robots to soldiers fighting in Afghanistan — that is, if Congress doesn't cut its funding first. Combat veterans testing the BCTM network say that it would help soldiers avoid roadside bombs and insurgent ambushes by better collecting intelligence and sharing it rapidly among the entire force.

For example, soldiers about to enter a town could send the BCTM surveillance robot into abandoned houses, transmitting streaming video over the BCTM network of armed insurgents or potential bombs. That's the kind of information that could save lives. Our soldiers need these capabilities.

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