



THE SACRAMENTO BEE



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RT wants arena ticket surcharge for light rail



Andy Alfaro The Sacramento Bee

Several light-rail stations are within blocks of the proposed downtown arena. Under RT's proposal, arena tickets would double as transit passes.

GETTING DOWNTOWN

For attendees who drive instead of taking transit, an estimated 7,500 parking spaces are expected to be available for arena users on weeknights within a quarter-mile. An analysis estimates 7,000 cars would arrive downtown for a sold-out arena event. A quarter-mile is a bit closer than the farthest parking spots at Sleep Train Arena.

- Proposed street closures for arena events
- Public and private lots expected to be available for parking
- Light rail with station



Sources: Draft arena environmental impact report, Bee analysis

Nathaniel Levine nlevine@sacbee.com

Obama urged to curb the NSA

HIS PANEL OFFERS FIXES FOR SPYING PROGRAMS

By LESLEY CLARK AND ALI WATKINS
McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON - A group appointed by President Barack Obama to review U.S. surveillance tactics is recommending widespread changes to the controversial National Security Agency spy programs, including ending the NSA's dragnet collection of millions of Americans' telephone records.

The report by the Review Group on Intelligence and Communications Technologies doesn't call for the elimination of the spying program but proposes nearly 50 fixes, acknowledging that privacy and civil liberties "can be and at times have been eroded by excessive intelligence collection."

Obama, who met Wednesday at the White House with members of the panel, is reviewing the recommendations with his national security staff and will announce in January which recommendations the administration will adopt.

The White House said it wouldn't comment on the group's recommendations while its internal review is underway. It said Obama told the group that he expects the United States to use its intelligence capabilities "in a way that optimally protects our national security while supporting our foreign policy, respecting privacy and civil liberties."

PANEL | Page A13

AIM IS TO LIFT DOWNTOWN SERVICE, REDUCE AUTO TRAFFIC

LIVE CHAT

Chat live with The Sacramento Bee's arena team as we look at plans for a new downtown arena for the Kings. Who pays, who benefits, and what will the traffic impact be? Join the chat at 11:30 a.m. Friday. sacbee.com/live

By TONY BIZJAK
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Sacramento's light-rail operator made a bid this week for a bigger piece of the action at a downtown arena, asking Kings officials to impose a surcharge on arena event tickets to help pay for more trains and transit security before and after events.

Sacramento Regional Transit representatives, who made the proposal to the Kings on Monday, say they believe the funding boost could bulk up the transit system to attract as much as 20 percent of Kings fans - far more than the 7 percent that the Kings and city officials projected in an analysis earlier this week.

As part of their plan, transit officials say they'd also like to see arena tickets double as transit boarding passes.

"Our research says somewhere between 10 and 20 percent on light rail, if you put in place the conditions and incentives," RT General Manager Mike Wiley said. "If we provide a high level of security at park-and-ride lots until after the event, that will make it more attractive to feel comfortable parking there."

Wiley said he hasn't discussed a specific amount with the Kings, but

an RT analysis suggests a 50-cent ticket surcharge could bring in the money needed to provide solid service for arena events.

The proposal comes as the Kings and the city circulated an arena environmental impact report this week analyzing traffic and other potential impacts from the planned project at Downtown Plaza. While nearly 100 percent of event-goers at Sleep Train Arena in Natomas arrive in cars, the downtown arena opens up a variety of new transportation possibilities. Some arena-goers are expected to come over on foot from downtown.

RT | Back page, A16

New strain of botulism is identified

BIOWEAPON CONCERNS KEEP GENE CODE SECRET

By EDWARD ORTIZ
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The discovery of a new strain of botulism - the first in 40 years - has spurred bioterrorism concerns among state health officials, who have removed the deadly toxin's genetic sequencing information from recently published research, a move that some scientists find alarming.

The new toxin, *Clostridium botulinum*, was discovered in California this year by the state Department of Public Health. An infant who contracted the illness survived, although the state health department has not said when or where the baby was examined or treated.

While the agency's findings appeared in the Journal of Infectious Diseases in October, the genetic sequence that makes up the botulism toxin was not included in the report.

Removal of the information has spawned concern among scientists who regard access to all scientific research findings as sacrosanct. The issue is reminiscent of a January 2012 controversy over a federal advisory board's call for scientific research into avian flu, known as H5N1, to be kept under wraps so it could not be exploited by a rogue state or bioterrorist group. The research eventually was published in scientific journals several months later.

The decision to withhold the newly discovered botulism toxin's genetic code is a

BOTULISM | Page A13

Britain to join nations using plastic currency

NEW BILLS LAST LONGER, BUT ARE NOT AS POPULAR

By IAN AUSTEN AND NATHANIEL POPPER
The New York Times

OTTAWA, Ontario - The trouble with paper money, aside from the facts that we spend it too easily and governments often print too much of it, is that it wears out too fast - especially in balmy places with high humidity.

Bills made of plastic, on the other hand, do not have that problem and can be manufactured with sophisticated security features to vex counterfeiters.

Polymer bank notes, as they are

called, are catching on around the world despite skepticism from consumers wherever they are introduced.

Last month, Canada abandoned the last of its paper currency in favor of plastic money, following the example of Australia and about two dozen other countries. In what could be the biggest boost for polymer notes to date, the Bank of England, now run by Canada's former central banker, Mark J. Carney, announced Wednesday that it would follow suit.

Christopher Jeffery, editor of Central Banking Publications, a trade magazine based in London, said that there seemed to be no stopping the move to polymer. And that will accelerate when Bri-



DYLAN MARTINEZ THE NEW YORK TIMES

Victoria Cleland, the head of notes at the Bank of England, shows a design for a 5-pound note featuring Winston Churchill on Wednesday.

tain's "fivers" and other notes join in beginning in 2016.

"Pending some kind of catastrophe, it's going to be more of a continued trend toward using polymer," Jeffery said.

The United States remains a

notable holdout. Officials at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing have said that they have looked into switching to plastic, but a spokeswoman said there were no current discussions.

MONEY | Back page, A16

TOP STORIES

OUR REGION

A UC Davis physician who testified last year in support of a new state law, which goes into effect Jan. 1, making it more difficult for families to opt out of vaccinating their children is opening a clinic to make it easier. **B1**

CAPITOL & CALIFORNIA

A policy requiring the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing to obtain approval from the Governor's Office before pursuing discrimination claims against public agencies has compromised the department's independence, state overseers report. **A3**

WORLD

The State Department warns that a new terrorist group linked to an Algerian militant has emerged as "the greatest near-term threat to U.S. and Western interests" in the Sahel region of Africa, a vast area that stretches from Senegal to Chad. **A11**

NATION

New guidelines suggest that people older than 60 can have a higher blood pressure than previously recommended before starting treatment to lower it. The advice changes treatment goals that have been in place for more than 30 years. **A6**

BUSINESS

The Federal Reserve has decided to reduce its stimulus for the U.S. economy because the job market has shown steady improvement, yet strengthened its commitment to record-low short-term interest rates. **B6**



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FROM THE COVER

Botulism: Secrecy over genetic code alarms scientists

FROM PAGE A1

covered botulism gene sequence came after scientists consulted with federal agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Defense, the Department of Justice, and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, said Stephen Arnon, lead researcher of the paper and chief of the Infant Botulism Treatment and Prevention program at the state Department of Public Health.

Central to the department's decision is the fact that no antitoxin exists to treat an accidental or premeditated outbreak of the toxin. It takes roughly one to two years to develop an antitoxin.

The fear among some is that gene sequence information gleaned from published research could be used to develop a bioweapon that can be spread as an aerosol, resulting in many fatalities. Recent advances in technology have made it possible to reproduce such toxins, said David Relman, professor of medicine and microbiology at the Stanford University School of Medicine.

"There is certainly more awareness of the possibility of doing harm - not only of the means and capability of doing harm - but also the fact that there seems to be more people who voice that kind of perspective and intention," said Relman.

Cloning a toxin would have been a fairly involved undertaking in 1970, whereas it is not so now, Relman said.

"The recommendations from the federal government were clear on the potential risks of publishing the gene sequence," said Arnon. "There was agreement among all involved in the discussions that it would be possible to publish this information to achieve the scientific and public health benefits of sharing the finding while safeguarding national security."

Identifying a new botulism toxin is a difficult process that requires specialized laboratories. The state Department of Public Health is one of the few agencies charged nationally with the development of antitoxins for botulism strains. There are now eight.

Arnon said it's possible the new toxin has caused others to become ill but wasn't recognized as the new botulism strain. *Clostridium botulinum* is part of a family tree of bacteria that produces a wide range of toxins. This particular toxin is considered deadly - inhaling just a minute amount of it would prove fa-

tal to an adult.

Research papers on the discovery of deadly toxins are not rare. When they are published, the gene sequencing information has been included. The information is a key tool for scientists who are researching such toxins and ways to counteract them in lab animals and humans.

"This is pretty unusual - for them to flag something like this and have some internal review and discussions with the powers that be and decide to black out the section of the genome corresponding to that toxin," said Jonathan Eisen, a microbiology professor at UC Davis and an investigator with the federal Department of Energy's Joint Genome Institute.

Before taking his post at UC Davis, while at the Institute for Genomic Research, Eisen worked on genome sequencing of anthrax placed in letters that killed or sickened 22 individuals in 2001.

"We had many, many discussions about whether one should publish the genome data. In general, all the conclusions were that it was better to publish the data," said Eisen. "As a scientist, if something is published, you want to be able to see everything. You want to see their method. People should have access to all the different data ... in order to reassess for yourself whether or not you agree with their conclusions. That is the general practice of science."

For some, constraining science is problematic.

"There is no tried and true formula for resolving this kind of conflict," said Steven Aftergood, director of the Federation of American Scientists' Project on Government Secrecy. "If the government were to step in and prohibit publication of certain research, that would indeed be censorship, and would create other sorts of problems, like the development of a new kind of scientific underground, a shift to research overseas, and so on."

Papers with full genetic sequence information generally have been published without incident. In 2005, gene sequence information for the 1918 Spanish flu virus, taken from tissue of an Inuit woman who died from the virus in 1918, was made public. The woman's body had been preserved in the Alaskan tundra since her death.

The Spanish flu, which appeared in the winter of 1918, killed 50 million people.

Call The Bee's Edward Ortiz, (916) 321-1071. Follow him on Twitter @edwardortiz.

Panel: Curbs on NSA urged

FROM PAGE A1

liberties, maintaining the public trust, and reducing the risk of unauthorized disclosure."

Obama announced the group in August amid rising public concern over the scope of surveillance following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Documents obtained by former NSA contractor Edward Snowden showed the NSA was collecting the telephone records of tens of millions of Verizon customers as well as emails through nine companies including tech giants Microsoft, Yahoo, Google and Facebook.

The authors of the report said the changes - some of which require congressional approval - would protect privacy and civil liberties without undermining national security.

"We're not saying that the struggle against terrorism is over or that it has declined to such an extent that we can dismantle the mechanisms that we have put in place to safeguard the country," said Richard Clarke, who served as a counterterrorism and security adviser in the administrations of Presidents George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. "What we are saying is those mechanisms can be more transparent, and that they can have more independent outside oversight and judicial oversight."

Clarke said the fixes would give the public "a sense of trust that goes beyond what it has today."

Of the panel's 46 recommendations, it most notably calls for an end to the NSA's storage of Americans' telephone records. Despite NSA officials' assurances that the metadata are simply unimportant, impersonal digits, board members said it should not be in the hands of the government. Instead, the recommendations call for the data to be kept by phone companies or another third party, available for the government with a specific court order akin to a warrant.

"A fundamental recommendation is that the government should not hold on to this data," said panel member Michael Morell, the former deputy director of the CIA. "And we leave it an open question who should."

But the concept of taking the records out of the government's hands may be a tough sell with the NSA, which says the dragnet allows it to have the complete "haystack" of possible terror connections. By letting phone companies keep the records, NSA director Gen. Keith Alexander has said, the NSA is unable to see all of the possible connections.

"If you only go to one company, you'll see what that phone company has. But



Patrick Semansky The Associated Press

A presidential panel has recommended dozens of changes to government surveillance programs, including ending the NSA's collection of Americans' phone records.

you may not see what the other phone company has or the other," Alexander recently told CBS' "60 Minutes." "So by putting those together, we can see all of that essentially at one time."

In addition to allowing phone companies to hold the data, the panel also calls for each query to have its own specific court order. A bulk court order - which the agency is currently using - would no longer be permissible.

The board also urges more stringent handling of Americans' data that are collected incidentally through targeting foreigners, or as NSA critics have called it, the "backdoor loophole."

The revelations that the United States was spying on foreign allies sparked outrage abroad. The panel defines concrete standards for targeting the communications of foreign leaders and calls for Obama to create a new process that requires the "highest-level approval" of all such surveillance.

The panel also addressed the secret Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, which has long been pegged by NSA critics as a rubber stamp for the nation's intelligence community. A public interest advocate to represent Americans' interest in the government's dealings with the court is necessary, the panel says, and more of the court's decisions should be declassified.

It also recommends providing privacy act protections to both U.S. and non-U.S. citizens, and that the next NSA director be a civilian and be subject to Senate confirmation.

The release comes just days after a federal judge found that the program that collects massive amounts of telephone data "likely" violates the Constitution. Though that ruling is stayed pending the government's appeal, the legal argument is expected to end up before the U.S. Supreme Court.

In his decision, U.S. District Judge Richard Leon of Washington took note of what he called the "almost Orwellian technology that enables the government to store and analyze the phone metadata of every telephone user in the United States."

Some civil liberties groups had expressed worries that the panel's members were too close to the Obama administration to provide a conclusive fix, but the American Civil Liberties Union said Wednesday that the report includes many ACLU positions, and it encouraged Obama to adopt them.

The Open Technology Institute hailed some of the findings but called on Obama to end the bulk collection program entirely. The group's policy director, Kevin Bankston, said Obama should "consider the positive reforms contained in the review group report as the floor, not the ceiling, when it comes to reining in the NSA's massive surveillance programs and enacting meaningful reforms."

Obama would be "well served to take the advice of the board and restructure the program as soon as possible," said Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Burbank, a member of the House intelligence committee. Citing the recent court ruling and congressional interest in overhauling the NSA, Schiff added, "It would be better to have this undertaken in an orderly and expeditious fashion than to wait for it to be compelled by the Congress or the courts."

The spy program began during George W. Bush's administration and has been continued through Obama's presidency. The program operates by having FBI agents obtain orders from the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, directing telecommunications companies to turn over the information on an ongoing, daily basis.

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