

# Opinion / Politics

— LETTERS TO THE EDITOR —

### Timber harvest would help local watershed

To the Editor:

Our Baker City watershed is a crown jewel, providing clean drinking water at a very reasonable price to the citizens of Baker City, Oregon. Currently, the fuel loads that consist of overcrowded dead and diseased trees contribute to a total fuel loads equal to and greater than what existed on Dooley Mountain when the Cornet/Windy Ridge Fire burned in August 2015. We all know how that ended. That 104,000 acre wildfire burned in just four days. Our 10,000 acre watershed could easily burn in an afternoon.

Such a wildfire fire burning in the city watershed could easily burn with the intensity as the Cornet/Windy Ridge Wildfire, rendering the Baker City water supply undrinkable and would result in the necessity to build a \$15 to 20 million dollar water treatment plant. The citizens of Baker City cannot afford that cost. Nor should they be forced to because of the lack of action on this critical issue.

We need to band to together and work to prevent that!

What can be done? Endless studies and delaying the clean-up action will not end well! Time is of the essence!

Being an active and concerned forester for many years, I have helped numerous forestland owners to effectively and significantly reduce the wildfire risk on their forest properties through selective logging and forest restoration operations. Several examples of this type of operation are present both on USFS and private forestland on Dooley Mountain. These forest parcels largely escaped the damage that occurred on untreated ground.

To effectively treat the forest health problem in the Baker City Watershed, some form of selective timber harvesting and fuel reduction must occur.

I invite the citizens of Baker City to the city council meeting Tuesday, April 11 at 7:00 p.m. to voice your concern and support the effort to work with the Wallowa Whitman National Forest staff to see that the city watershed fuel loads are reduced and forest health is restored to protect our precious and sparkling clean drinking water source.

Arvid Andersen  
Baker City

### Trump is a science-denier

To the Editor:

In January 2015, a politician said to David Letterman:

“A friend of mine was in Scotland recently. He got very, very sick. They took him by ambulance and he was there for four days. He was really in trouble, and they released him and he said, ‘Where do I pay?’ And they said, ‘There’s no charge.’ Not only that, he said it was like great doctors, great care. I mean we could have a great system in this country.”

In 2000, the same politician in his book “The America We Deserve” wrote:

“The Canadian plan also helps Canadians live longer and healthier than Americans ... We need, as a nation, to reexamine the single-payer plan, as many

individual states are doing.”

Now that’s a politician I can vote for! But when he ran for president, I didn’t vote for him, because Donald J. Trump exchanged his spots for stripes, and is no longer the same man who he was two years ago and seventeen years ago.

Instead he campaigned on getting rid of Obama Care and gave us Trump/Ryan Care. But recent town hall meetings show that the Republicans have completely misread what kind of healthcare Americans want.

It appears that Americans really believe that health care should be a human right. Right up there with the big three in the Declaration of Independence: the right to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and health care for all.

And then, after 140 countries in the world, including the U.S., have signed the Paris accords vowing to roll back global warming, President Trump rolls back previous administrations’ attempts to clean up the world’s most polluting industry.

For two centuries coal has been polluting the world’s life-sustaining air. President Trump has even forbid all Executive Branch employees from mentioning global warming, even in emails.

President Trump is a head-in-the-sand science-denier, for which he is mocked by leaders around the world for that and many other reasons.

Gary Dielman  
Baker City

### OBSC says thank you

To the Editor:

The Owyhee Basin Stewardship Coalition (OBSC) would like to thank the 15,000 advocates from across the West who stepped up to support Eastern Oregon in opposing a national monument without a vote of Congress.

Since we successfully concluded our campaign on Jan. 20, the coalition board has sought feedback from our members and the Malheur County community about the next steps for our organization and our 15,000 members.

We hosted a meeting on Feb. 14 in Ontario to collect community feedback and we posted an online survey where we collected 73 comments.

Based on that feedback from our community, the OBSC board has a clear direction:

Sustain a healthy working landscape in Malheur County:

In the coming weeks, the OBSC will transition from its mission of defeating a national monument to start working a plan to get to a healthy, working landscape for the sustainability of our communities and future generations.

It’s our public land. We will work to make sure that our voices continue to be heard.

If you want to share additional thoughts, please send them to me at feedback@ourlandourvoice.com. Thank you for your consistent and ongoing support.

Steve Russell  
Chairman  
Owyhee Basin Stewardship Coalition  
Ontario

— GUEST OPINION —

## Call to arms against lousy gun bills

By The Oregon Firearms Federation

On March 22nd, we asked you to contact House Rep Brad Witt to express your concerns with his House Joint Resolution 13.

As many of you who contacted him know, Rep Witt has heard your concerns and agrees that in its current form, HJR 13 is overly broad and could well create situations Witt never intended.

He has agreed to rework the resolution to address those issues.

But there is lots more to be done.

As you know the passage of SB 941 in 2015 has caused all of the problems we predicted it would. 941 outlawed most private transfers of firearms and was nothing more than a payoff to Mike Bloomberg and an attack on law abiding gun owners.

We repeatedly warned legislators that this bill was dangerous and opposed by most counties and most Sheriffs.

The anti-gun liberals in the legislature and big city cops who supported this law showed no interest in actually enforcing it when one of their own anti-gun activists blatantly violated it. But the damage it has done to Oregonians is incalculable.

The liberals who pushed 941 through to pay Bloomberg back for the money he poured into Oregon claimed the bill was about “safety” and “keeping guns out of the wrong hands.” They told us it was for the good of “domestic violence victims.”

And of course, it was all lies.

In fact, 941 has made Oregon a far less safe place.

As we have reported many times, when people who are identified as “prohibited persons” attempt to buy guns, they are virtually never arrested, even if they are actively wanted at the time!

Under 941 it is now a crime to safeguard a firearm for a neighbor who is going out of town or a friend who needs to remove a gun from his home for personal reasons. This from the same people who are demanding “safe storage” of firearms.

But it’s even worse than that. As result of the refusal of the anti-gun

left to even consider the consequences of SB 941, Oregon has put its most vulnerable directly in the cross hairs of violence.

Oregon has a program for people who have active and credible threats against their lives.

It’s called the “Address Confidentiality Program” and participants essentially live in hiding.

Thanks to the leftist supporters of SB 941, all of whom generate plenty of theater about protecting the victims of domestic violence, anyone covered under the program is forbidden from buying a gun.

You heard that right.

The law forbids people who live in daily fear from purchasing a firearm to defend themselves and their children.

This is so obviously wrong it is hard to believe that even the most ardent haters of gun rights could justify it.

But of course, they do.

We want to fix this.

Make no mistake, all of SB 941 is flat out bad law and we want to see the whole bill repealed. But as we move towards that goal we want to reverse as many of the worst elements of the bill as we can.

There are other effects of 941.

For example, people who live in recreational vehicles can no longer legally buy firearms if they have a “continuous traveler” driver’s license and now even antique firearms require a background check for a “private” transfer, something not required for a purchase from a dealer!

Quite a few good bills have been introduced by our friends in the legislature.

You can see all current 2017 gun bills here, but three bills that would address these crucial issues are languishing in the Senate Judiciary Committee chaired by Floyd Prozanski, one of the legislature’s most militant anti-gunners.

Those bills are: SB 667, SB 854 and SB 855.

Please contact Floyd Prozanski and tell him it’s time to fix the mess they made with SB 941.

Please consider cc’ing your note to Senate President Peter Courtney who has the power to instruct Prozanski to hear these important bills.

We cannot continue to allow the extremists in the legislature to keep putting innocent people at risk.

Prozanski’s email is Sen.FloydProzanski@OregonLegislature.gov

Courtney’s email is sen.petercourtney@oregonlegislature.gov

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## Senate bill would give more ATV freedom

Last week the Oregon Senate voted to pass Senate Republican Leader Ted Ferrioli’s legislation to give more transportation freedom to rural Oregonians.

"Rural Oregon is a key to the success of our state. Local areas can manage their own roads and need more freedom to decide how roadways and highways can be better used by drivers who face unique terrains and environments," said Ferrioli, of John Day.

Senate Bill 344 allows a road authority to authorize ATV use within highway right of way in counties with a population less than 20,000. The road authority has to designate that portion of the highway "an all-terrain vehicle access route."

Under the bill, signs would be posted giving notice of the changed road status.

The measure is the prod-

uct of a workgroup consisting of ATV users and vehicle dealers, Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department and Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) staff.

In rural Oregon, cities and counties have adopted ordinances to allow ATV use on city and county roads, but a state highway is the main access road in many rural communities. This presents tremendous challenge in reaching a destination.

Per ODOT, if a trail ends at a road, and another trail picks up a short distance down the road on the other side, it might make sense to allow the ATV to travel along or down the road to pick up the next trail.

Another example would be to travel from a campground to the nearby grocery store, gas station, or restaurant, ODOT says.

Currently, there are at

least 35 other states that allow ATV use on roads.

Since 2004, of the 35 states that have allowed ATV use on roadways, 22 have passed laws to do so. Senate Bill 344 also creates an all-terrain vehicle access routes advisory committee, comprised of nine members: seven appointed by the Director of OPRD, a representative of the Oregon State Police, and the Director of ODOT or their designee.

The advisory committee is tasked with evaluating access routes for ATVs on portions of highway right of way, conducting field reviews, and reporting to and making recommendations to ODOT regarding establishment of highway access routes.

The advisory committee will be provided staff support from OPRD.