

Weaver criticizes BPA

By TOM JACKSON
Of the Emerald

"I think it's madness to use the kind of energy we're using in this country today," said Congressman Jim Weaver Thursday in a discussion of future energy problems of the country and of the northwest in particular.

Weaver is concerned about the energy policies of the government, and has been especially critical of the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA).

Weaver has filed suit against the BPA because of their rate and contract policies, which he believes are not in the best interest of Oregon and the Northwest.

Weaver feels that the BPA is giving preferential treatment to the aluminum companies in the Northwest when the energy demands of the public should be given equal or greater consideration. Weaver pointed to the large

consumption rates of the aluminum industry and the low rates for electrical power from the BPA to substantiate his claim. In terms of gasoline, Weaver said that "the aluminum companies use about twice as much energy as all the vehicles in Oregon, for the equivalent of about five cents per gallon."

The companies say that this power is low grade because it is more interruptible than the power sold to the public. Weaver labels this claim "deceit," and says that the power has rarely been interrupted in the past.

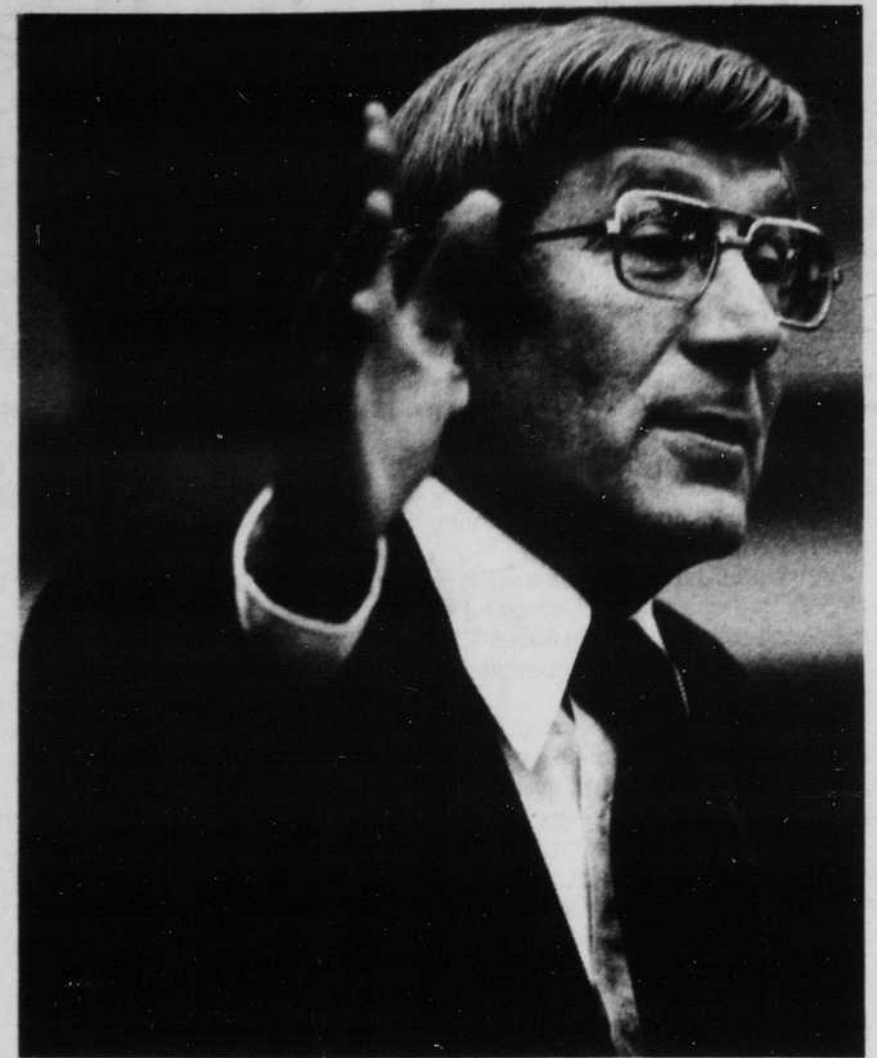
While the rate structure is the central issue of Weaver's law suit, he also feels that the BPA should not be allowed to make long-term contracts with the aluminum companies.

He is also sponsoring a bill which would, if passed, greatly change the rate structure of the BPA. The bill includes a "lifeline"

rate system, restrictions on the BPA's ability to contract with industrial customers for long periods of time, and a requirement that the BPA hold a public hearing before contracting to sell power. It also includes a provision for preference among industrial customers to those producing goods indigenous to the United States and a provision to allow the BPA to research alternative sources of power.

The "lifeline" rate is the most controversial of these proposals. It is a suggestion for conservation of power by giving public consumers a low price for an amount of power that would meet average needs. Prices would rise "sharply" for use of power above the given amount.

Regarding other problems, Weaver said he would like to ration gasoline along the same lines as his "lifeline" plan for electricity.



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