

A sane energy policy

People in high places are coming around to the idea that conservation measures cost less than building new energy generating facilities. Don Hodel of the Bonneville Power Administration suggested this spring that his office might get into the business of insulating homes since that would be cheaper than building new nuclear power plants to heat them.

A bill introduced by Congressman Jim Weaver, HR 5862, incorporates that idea and takes it farther. Weaver's bill is a drastic proposal designed to deal with a drastic problem: the prospect of scarce, expensive electrical energy in the Northwest. It's exactly the sort of plan we need for making the best of the energy resources now available and for minimizing our dependence on costly new thermal plants.

Weaver's bill would dismantle the BPA and replace it with a regional energy cooperative that would buy and sell all power generated in the Northwest. The new cooperative, called the Columbia Basin Energy Corporation, would relegate public and private utilities to the status of distributors.

The CBEC would institute a three-price rate structure that radically departs from present energy pricing policy. The cheapest electricity, that which is generated by dams whose construction costs have been paid off, would be reserved for residential and farm customers. This power would cost anywhere from 17 to 48 per cent less than residential power costs now and would fill about three quarters of current demand.

Electricity generated at newer existing facilities would be priced to reflect its cost of production. This power would be sold to industries either directly or through utilities and would fill unmet demand in the residential sector. The higher cost of this electricity would be a stiff incentive to conserve. It is expected that industry would pass its higher costs on to consumers, but because hydroelectric power would still be a substantial part of the energy available to industry, power costs in the Northwest would remain relatively low.

Another price would be established for electricity generated at plants that become operable after Jan. 1, 1978. This power, too, would be sold for whatever it costs to produce. New generating facilities would be approved by the CBEC only if they could prove themselves more cost-efficient than conservation or alternate energy sources. In other words, nuclear plants could not be built unless it could be demonstrated that there were buyers ready to pay the full cost of the energy they generate.

Currently, the high cost of new generating capacity is hidden by the pricing structure. Expensive thermal energy is mixed with cheap hydropower, and the cost of electricity represents an average of two. The CBEC pricing plan would reveal the true cost of new capacity while rewarding conservation efforts with low electricity bills. But cost-of-production pricing alone will not be enough to make nuclear construction necessary. To keep power prices low it will be necessary to reduce demand for electricity. Weaver's bill would do this by insulating and weatherizing every structure in the Northwest within a 10-year period.

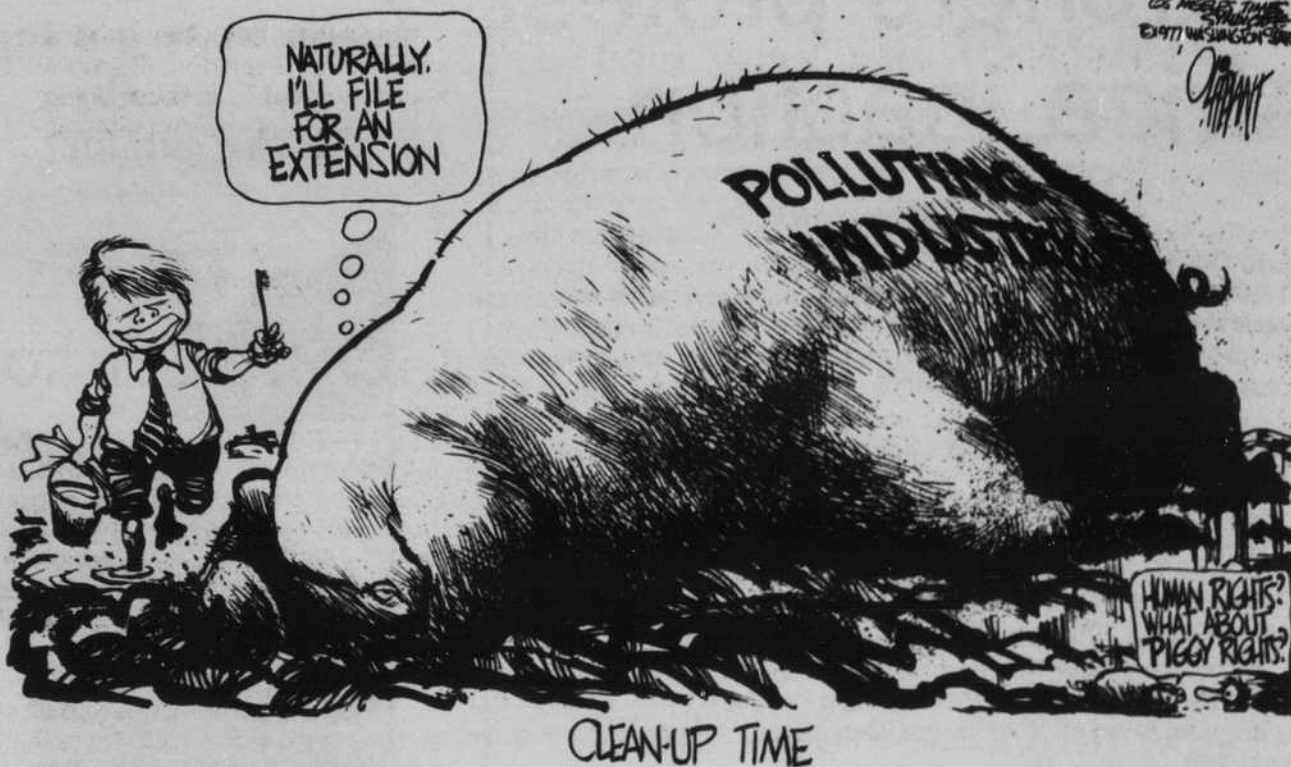
This enormous construction project is expected to cost between two and three billion dollars. CBEC would float federal bonds to raise the money and hand out 100 per cent grants to the utilities for the program.

This is an ambitious plan, and the cost sounds high. But a Weaver aide points out that for the cost of two nuclear facilities the size of the proposed Pebble Springs plants, every home and public building in the Northwest could be retrofitted for energy efficiency.

The insulation and weatherization program would stimulate employment and materials sales throughout the region. Homeowners and businesses would gain disposable income because of lower electricity bills. In Oregon alone, it is estimated that the direct economic stimuli of the project would add up to \$225 million a year, enough to make the project an even-money proposition. And the BPA estimates that it costs six times as much to generate new energy than it does to save it through insulation.

Weaver's CBEC bill is currently in Rep. Lloyd Meeds', D-Wash, Water and Power Subcommittee, which is part of the House Committee on Internal and Insular affairs. Utilities are saying that the CBEC plan would increase their administrative costs and that conservation measures don't work, making new thermal plants a necessity. Industries don't like the idea of paying higher electricity rates than residential customers.

The CBEC bill will need a lot of public support, especially from people outside Weaver's district. And Weaver's plan deserves strong backing. It is the fairest and most comprehensive plan for a rational regional energy policy yet advanced.



opinion

Hiring practices fair and above-board

Well, it seems the Emerald editorial staff has done it again! Their shotgun editorial of Thursday, June 2 seems to malign almost everybody with a series of unfortunate misinterpretations and distortions. (I am hardly the highest paid ASUO employee.) I am not one to strike out at the Emerald just because it's the Emerald. Often, the editors and staff of this paper have provided us with good reporting and incisive editorials. But when honest, upstanding, and self-sacrificing student leaders like Jamie Burns, Jan Oliver, and Gary Feldman, are ruthlessly and inappropriately attacked, I feel a need to set the record straight.

First the editorial seems to demean both Jamie Burns and Jan Oliver's efforts at affirmative action in their hiring. Had the editor taken the time to review the excellent affirmative action program designed by those two individuals and their staff, they would know that it is an exemplary affirmative action program used as a model by many campuses. Part of that program, as in any employment program, allows the hiring officer to either renew the contract of an employee or to open the position for a search. There are advantages to both strategies. If the hiring official renews the contract of a satisfactory employee, many advantages accrue. First, the employee's experience on the job makes it so that he or she might begin their work quickly and efficiently. In other words, on-the-job training time can be limited. Second, the experience the employee has also provides working relationships with officials on the campus and throughout the state that might best serve the students' interest. Third, renewal provides the employee an understanding that if he or she provides good performance there is an option for renewal.

On the other hand, if the performance of the employee is less than satisfactory, the employer can open the job for applications and conduct a search. The editorial seemed to put my performance in question, balancing those who would say "he saved the

students money far in excess of his salary" and those (I wonder who these people are) who claim "he is lining his pocket at the expense of the students." Even though the editorial says this is not the question I feel confident that the 2400 students served by the Office of the Director of OSA this year could easily provide a testimonial to the quality services provided to them. Many who have read the editorial have indicated their willingness to do so.

Moving off of that "non-question," I think it's important people understand that my contract with the ASUO for 1975-76 was renewed for 1976-77. The choice to renew or to provide a search was discussed extensively both within the ASUO and with the Affirmative Action Office on campus. Every effort was made to avoid even the appearance of "in-house favoritism." When Jan Oliver and Jamie Burns made the decision to renew my contract they believed that the advantages of renewal that I have mentioned would provide the students with the best possible service in OSA.

Next, the editor argues that even though renewal is a viable and reasonable option in this case, the job "should be thrown up for grabs." This seems to ignore the best interests of the students the OSA is designed to serve. I believe that Gary Feldman should be given the option of renewing or throwing the contract open based on my performance as director. Despite his "close personal ties," he has had the issue argued and discussed fully and completely. I feel confident that he will make an objective and appropriate decision. To paraphrase the editorial, when so much money is involved there should be no doubt that he be given this choice.

Finally, I have never worked actively on any student's campaign, believing such an effort inappropriate for a professional employee.

Don Chalmers

Director — Office of Student Advocacy

Letters

Nails or hemlock

A thought for the tenure committee: If Socrates or Jesus were to apply for tenure at the University of Oregon, they would be denied. Without the teaching of Socrates, there would have been no foundation for the publications of Plato and Aristotle. Without the teaching of Jesus, there would have been no foundation for the publications of Paul or Augustine or De Chardin. Without these there would have been no foundations of western thought to be shaken by Charles Darwin who also would have been denied tenure because, although he did publish a few insignificant articles in his thirties, he did not make a "significant, original and creative scholarly contribution" until very late in life indeed.

This is not to negate the value of quality scholarship. And surely the University is the right place for scholarship. A world where the only scholarship of importance takes place in the laboratories of Bell Telephone and Dow Chemical would be depressing as well as more dangerous than it is already. Notwithstanding, the Uni-

versity is also the place for the truly great teacher to inspire the future scholars. If not at the universities, then where?

Of course this is written with the full knowledge of its futility. There is no one, I suspect, who would believe that a university has the resources to develop a measuring instrument that can adequately evaluate teaching effectiveness, research in progress, and scholarly contribution. It is much more scientific to count pages in print: that surely measures something.

And, of course, if all else fails, in our civilized society denial of tenure is much more acceptable than the use of nails or hemlock.

Norene Higgins
Graduate

Curriculum and Instruction

Siting authority

Gov. Bob Straub has introduced HB 333, which would transfer the responsibility of setting criteria for site certificates of nuclear power plants from the Energy Facilities Siting Council to the State Legislature. The EFSC is currently in the process of establishing site criteria for nuclear power plants. The Governor's bill excludes the public's input into the

criteria setting process. This bill circumvents establishment of due process by the EFSC as mandated by a Supreme Court ruling, and hurries Oregon pell mell down a path of increased dependence on the electricity from nuclear power. This bill would loosen the site criteria to a set of broad guidelines legislatively approved.

The dangers inherent in nuclear power, along with the dilemma of radioactive wastes, are not matters to be considered lightly. Before Oregon commits itself and future Oregonians to another nuclear power plant, the issues of nuclear safeguards, radioactive waste disposal, and the methodology of establishing future energy demands must answer the questions of all Oregonians. The hurried approval of nuclear power plants would leave unanswered the questions surrounding the protection of public safety and the assurance of a livable environment for current and future Oregonians.

I urge you to make your view on this issue known to Gov. Straub and the legislators in your district, all with the address of: State Capitol, Salem, Oregon, 97310.

Janet Gillaspie
Director-Survival Center

Friday, June 3, 1977