

Energy measure deserves our support

Ballot Measure 4 would give Oregon voters an opportunity to bring local control to electric service by easing formation procedures of People's Utility Districts (PUDs).

It should be passed.

Current state law requires two elections to set up a PUD. The first establishes district boundaries and elects a board of directors; the second grants the board authority to sell bonds, an essential budgeting power for any agency.

This procedure has proved so cumbersome that Oregon has only four operating PUDs, while Washington residents, having taken advantage of less obstructive laws, enjoy both 80 percent public-utility service and the lowest rates in the country.

Ballot Measure 4 would reduce this two-election process to a single vote, transfer governing authority over PUDs from the State Energy Department to county commissioners and allow the board to issue revenue and general-obligation bonds to establish and operate the new utility.

Measure 4 does not set up PUDs itself; it only simplifies the process should consumers desire one.

No blank check is given to the elected board of directors of a new PUD to levy taxes in a community. General obligation bonds may be issued only with the approval of local voters.

Oregon's legislature has failed to encourage formation of new PUDs that under present law have first access to cheap hydropower from the Bonneville

Power Administration. Indeed, the legislature has helped complicate the formation procedure now on the books, thus serving not consumers but well-financed, special interests.

Oregon's private utilities have spent \$162,701 so far to defeat the measure statewide and similar amounts to prevent formation of specific PUDs, including the proposed Emerald PUD in rural Lane County.

Measure 4 represents a challenge to the unjustifiable profits that private utilities obtain through their monopolies of electrical service.

The public deserves a fair choice on the nature of its access to a critical resource. We urge the approval of Measure 4.

Vote 'yes' on 9

If Ballot Measure 9 passes, private, investor-owned utilities in Oregon would no longer be allowed to charge the cost of borrowing money for construction projects in their rate bases.

The so-called "Construction Work in Progress" (CWIP) charges are unfair and unjustified.

Ballot Measure 9 deserves a yes vote.

The Public Utility Commission (PUC) has the authority to allow inclusion of these interest costs in utility bills on a case-by-case basis.

This practice had been prohibited until 1970, when Portland General Electric Co., stung by cost overruns at the Trojan nuclear plant, convinced the PUC to bail them out.

PGE's rates doubled between 1970 and 1975, as the cost of financing the plant shifted from the stockholders to the customers.

Oregon's private utilities realize the threat Measure 9 poses for continuation of this advantageous arrangement and have spent \$113,284 statewide to arrange its demise.

To allow CWIP charges in the rate base is to take away the utility customers' voice in the type or cost-effectiveness of the generating facilities thus financed. CWIP forces consumers to pay the partial cost for plants that may never produce a single kilowatt for their unwilling investors.

Ballot Measure 9 would prevent this unfair subsidization. Missouri voters passed a similar initiative in 1976 and sent the private utilities in that state a clear message: No more pay as you go, but Cash On Delivery.

Oregon should do the same.

Lane needs PUD

Voters in Eugene's outlying areas have a chance to approve formation of the Emerald People's Utility District (EPUD) with passage of Ballot Measure 22.

We think they should do it.

The proposed EPUD is one of five PUDs on ballots across the state. It would incorporate the Cottage Grove, Veneta, Junction City, Lowell, Coburg and Creswell areas into a public utility that would take over utility service from Pacific Power & Light Co.

Passage of 22 includes establishment of a five-member board of directors. This board would have the authority to levy a tax of one-half of one percent of the true cash value of all taxable property within the proposed district.

This tax, which spreads a cost of \$26.68 per person over a maximum 10-year period, is to finance an examination of the costs of acquiring PP&L's facilities.

Further financing of PUD operations through general obligation bonds must be approved by a vote of the public.

Public utilities are non-profit entities with preferential access to cheap hydropower. They do not need to pay dividends to stockholders or support a fleet of highly-paid executives. As a result public utilities such as EWEB and the Springfield Utility Board have been able to offer lower rates than PP&L or other private companies.

The Emerald PUD represents a great opportunity. It should be supported.

theirs



yours

Lane recallers

I am not a supporter of Lane County Commissioner Archie Weinstein. I probably won't vote for him in the future. Nevertheless, I do protest (your editorial notwithstanding) the mis-use of his recall, and the current abuse of the initiative recall so rampant in our society.

The initiative recall was designed to remove officials for gross incompetence. It was not meant to be a rallying cry for every self-interest group who disagrees with the views of an elected official.

Has Mr. Weinstein committed a crime? Has he caused grave public scandal by the conduct of his personal life? Has he mis-spent funds, failed to accept responsibility? Has he refused to make decisions? No.

What then, has he done? It seems that Mr. Weinstein's "crime" is that he has made some pretty unpopular economic decisions. That, sir, may (or may not be) an error of judgment; but, it hardly fits a definition for malfeasance.

Let's be honest. The initiative recall to replace Mr. W. is nothing more

than another blatant attempt to remove an official by a group of people who simply don't like him. The sponsors really could care less whether or not Archie "fails to perform the duties of his office." What they do care about is his blunt personality and his definition of government economics.

Unfortunately, the public is now caught up in the initiative recall euphoria. Recalling officials is now the "in" thing to do. This is a trend that will lead to disaster.

The continued abuse of the initiative recall will inevitably result in public apathy. Then, a really undeserving official will remain in office because a now disinterested public cried wolf too often.

The initiative recall is not a toy.

R.D. Sincavage
senior, education

Backs divestiture

This letter is a copy of one sent to Mr. Jeff Warren, chairer of the Uni-

versity Bookstore Board.

The letter, read by Douglas Huneke at the Oct. 18 Campus Christian Ministry Staff meeting, has the complete support of staff.

Loei Murphy
secretary, public relations,
Cooperative Christian Ministry

The staff of the Campus Christian Ministry is pleased with and supportive of the Bookstore Board's decision to divest itself of stocks with corporations doing business in South Africa. We realize that this is a difficult position to take. At the very least, you have acted rather than remained indifferent.

History will judge the effectiveness of all our work for majority rule in South Africa. We believe divestment is a moral choice in a situation where there are few other options. Again, thank you for taking this action.

Douglas K. Huneke
Presbyterian University Chaplain