

Sister sublime

oregon daily emerald

Vol. 90 No. 137

Eugene, Oregon 97403

Tuesday, May 8, 1979

Photo by Patrick Sullivan

Committee slows nuke 'dinosaur'

By GREG WASSON
Of the Emerald

SALEM — Almost 35 years ago, American atoms erased two Japanese cities from the globe. Fueled in part by the guilt of unleashing such a horror on the world, this country has spent the time since scrambling to transform those violent reactions into safe, usable power.

Monday, the Oregon House approved a measure, HB 2570, which says "no more plants 'til you figure out what to do with the waste."

The measure stipulates no further nuclear generation facilities may be licensed until construction has started on a federal nuclear waste repository. Debate on the issue lasted over three hours and included this call from Rep. Mary McCauley Burrows, R-Eug.: "I think we have to recognize that nuclear power is a dinosaur. Economically it's a dinosaur, politically it's a dinosaur, and, for some of us, morally. But this dinosaur is going to leave far more than footprints in the sand. They'll be dealing with atomic waste for generations to come."

Many speakers tried to narrow the discussion to the fact that any of the three choices was, in effect, a moratorium on the Pebble Springs project. Such efforts were resisted by Rep. Rick Bauman, D-Portland.

"The benefit of this bill is not that it's going to stop Pebble Springs. I doubt very seriously, regardless of what this body does, that Pebble Springs will ever be built. What this measure will do is serve notice to ourselves, our utilities, and our country that now is the time to make the commitment to other energy sources."

First-term Rep. John Schoon, R-Rickreall, told the body that he supported nuclear power when he joined the legislature in January, but that he changed his mind after his study as a member of the House Environment and Energy Committee.

"The clincher of this, for me, was sitting on the E&E committee, listening to the testimony of a Ph.D. who works for our federal government, the Environmental Protection Agency. Someone asked him about (waste) storage, and he said, very matter-of-factly, 'well, we've got so much of the stuff, and it would cost so much to build places to put it, that it's really doubtful that we're ever going to have permanent storage.'"

Arguments against the bill centered on economic reasons, the major one being that if Oregon hassles utilities seeking to build the Pebble Springs plant too much, they'll merely construct them across the Columbia River in Washington.

The bill now goes to the Senate, which has approved a less-stringent moratorium.

'Just a courtesy' ASUO letters welcome Vic

By SALLY HODGKINSON
Of the Emerald

Current ASUO Pres. Ramon Herrera and incoming Pres. Scott Bassett have entered the controversy surrounding Gov. Vic Atiyeh's scheduled spring commencement speech. At the request of University Pres. William Boyd, Herrera and Bassett have each written a letter to Atiyeh, inviting him on behalf of University students to speak at commencement. Meanwhile about 200 signatures of graduating students have been collected on a petition calling for replacement of Atiyeh.

"Everyone has a right to speak on this campus," says Herrera. "I consider it an honor to have the governor visit our campus on any occasion."

Ironically, Herrera signed the petition, which a group called the Senior Quacks are now circulating, before meeting with Boyd. Herrera says he now regrets signing, claiming that it was a "spur of the moment" move.

Both Herrera and Bassett say that because Atiyeh has already been invited, it's only polite to write a letter welcoming him.

"It's just a courtesy," says Bassett. "But I question whether it's appropriate for the ASUO to become involved."

Bassett says he would rather see someone else speak instead of Atiyeh, but adds that Atiyeh has already been invited.

Jim Stratton, who is heading the Senior Quacks' petition

drive, says he doesn't think Herrera and Bassett have "sold out."

"I think they're doing what they have to do politically," he says.

Boyd says he asked Herrera and Bassett to write the letters to "offer reassurance to the governor that he is welcomed on campus by students."

"I don't think either of them feels coerced in any way by my request," adds Boyd, noting that it would be demeaning to Herrera and Bassett if they or anyone else felt they could be easily influenced by him.

The majority of students don't agree with the Quacks' petition, says Boyd, adding that petitions don't have much influence on decisions.

"Petitions are generally not regarded as being formidable," says Boyd. "Their overuse has reduced their usefulness."

Denny Miles, an aide to Atiyeh, agrees.

"You could probably get 200 signatures on a petition to make the sun go down," he says.

"It (the petition drive) sounds more like a personal trip of the people involved than a serious discussion of an issue."

But if the Quacks gather the signatures of more than a majority of the 2,000 graduating students, the governor will reconsider his decision to speak at the University, says Miles.

"The governor is not going to impose his will on any group," he adds.

Right now the governor is

biding his time, says Miles, adding that Atiyeh sees the issue as a conflict in free speech.

"I don't think it's fair to embroil someone outside of the issue that has nothing to do with it," Miles says. "And it's a little frustrating and disappointing to have this happen after the governor was legitimately invited."

Although Stratton claims the governor's conservative political views make him an undesirable speaker, Herrera says that Atiyeh has been, in many ways, a friend of University students. The governor has supported HB 2831, which mandates the release of faculty evaluations, and has met with representatives from the Oregon Student Lobby to trim tuition increases, Herrera notes.

"I didn't vote for Atiyeh and I don't agree with all of his political views, but he has been pretty receptive to students," says Herrera.

Boyd agrees. "So far the students haven't had a better friend than Atiyeh," he claims.

Stratton says the Quacks are not only objecting to Atiyeh's political views but the way speakers are selected. Although there are three students on the selection committee, none are seniors.

Boyd says the students on the committee are recommended by the ASUO and approved by him. Boyd adds that the committee also makes recommen-

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today

The Eugene Water and Electric Board is asking for more time to decide what to do with its 30 percent share of the Trojan nuclear plant. See Page 6.

Oregon could implement an odd-even gasoline rationing plan tomorrow if need be, says the Department of Energy. See Page 7.

Watching the wheels of justice turn sure beats the soap operas. Jack Hatfield reports on some geriatric courtwatchers. See Page 8.