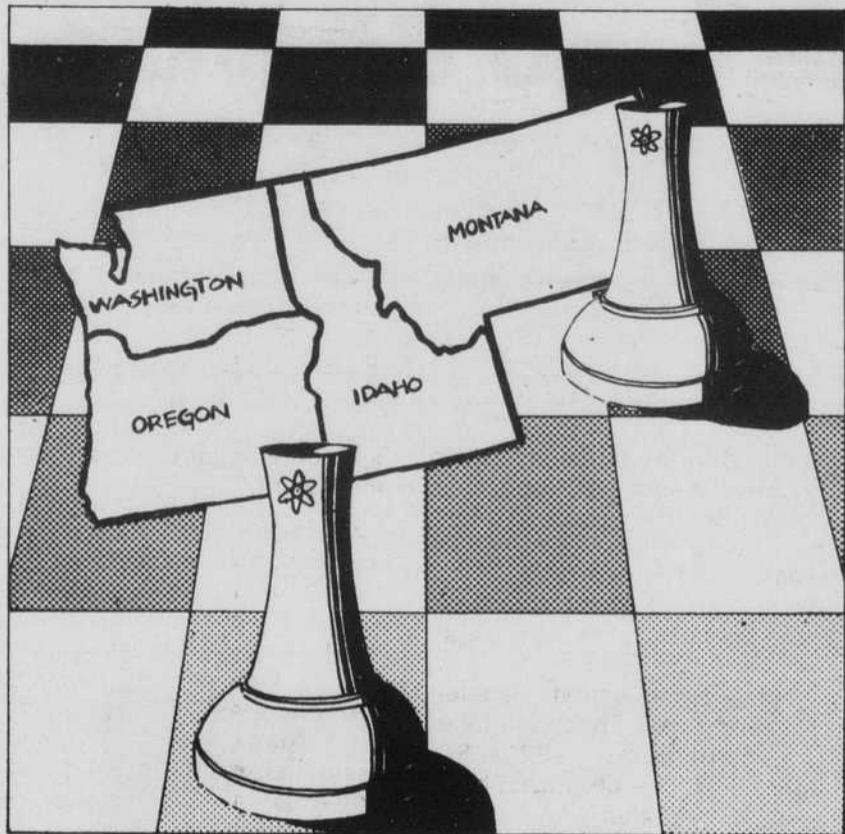


Governor defends regional power bill



Emerald graphic

By GREG WASSON
Of the Emerald

In 1978, Oregonians approved the construction-works-in-progress initiative, prohibiting utilities from charging for plants that aren't yet producing power.

Now, the regional energy act seems to allow utilities to charge Oregon consumers for construction of generating facilities in other states.

At a press conference Thursday, Gov. Vic Atiyeh was asked if he would support a lawsuit challenging the practice if Oregon consumers are charged for construction costs of plants in other states.

"I'd have to look at it before I answer your question, however, the regional bill does give additional Oregonians the advantage of cheap hydro-power," Atiyeh said. "The concept of the measure was a matter of rates and the matter of costs to us."

Not so, says one anti-nuclear lobbyist.

"The concept of the initiative was that we no longer want utilities to gamble with our money," he explains. "If Washington utilities are allowed to do what we stopped Oregon companies from doing, doesn't that violate the spirit of the law?"

The governor doesn't think so.

"Oregon law has not been subverted," Atiyeh said. "Construction works in progress and the measure banning nuclear power in Oregon (approved in November) are still premier. Now, the fact that someone somewhere else is going to have a nuclear plant and send that power to the line, I don't see

as muting Oregon's intention."

At this, Atiyeh was asked how siting decisions mean anything if Oregon money is used elsewhere to finance nuclear power. "I don't agree with your conclusion, and I'm not going to argue it here," he said.

Rep. Wayne Fawbush, D-Hood River, head of the House Energy Committee, said "If the BPA agrees to buy the two nuclear plants on the drawing board in Washington, Oregon's prohibition against putting construction works in progress in the rate base seems to say that Oregon consumers couldn't be charged anything for those plants until they are turned on."

But, as Assistant Public Utility Commissioner Roy Hemmingway explains, "The issue of construction works in progress is a two-fold question. First, what happens to the interest costs that are incurred during a plant construction? And

second, what happens to so-called dry holes where a plant never comes on line?"

"Now, the Oregon law says that both costs are to be excluded from the rates. But, the regional bill allows the BPA to purchase power and put those costs to the sale price for the rest of the region.

"So, if Portland General Electric and Pacific Power and Light buy power from BPA, it's possible that some of the costs included in those power rates would be cost prohibited by Oregon law."

At that point, says Hemmingway, the commissioner can say it's not his job to look at the costs that went into that power and allow utilities to pay whatever price BPA is asking.

"On the other hand, the Oregon law says that if PGE builds a plant, it would not be able to recover those costs."

Society can change says student activist

Students can change the country if they can only get together, according to an organizer for Students United for Political Action.

"There are over 100 student groups on this campus, but they're all focused on their individual concerns," Brad Passenger said at an organizational meeting for the groups Wednesday. He told the 11-person audience he hopes SUPA will become a coalition of student groups.

"If we can pick one issue relevant to each of those groups, bring those groups together, they would have tremendous power."

United States involvement in El Salvador is of particular interest, Passenger said. Uniting

groups like minority student unions to protest the issues can change the course of events, he said.

If Ronald Reagan receives thousands of telegrams, he'll have to consider their message, Passenger said.

"Although, he might not think much about it if he knows it's from a group of students," Passenger said. "He doesn't think much of students."

"But we need to get students working toward one goal. We're tempting fate with this El Salvador business."

Students may be the only people with the power to bring about change, he said.

"Once you get a job you're locked into the system. You've bought into the economy."

CURRENT

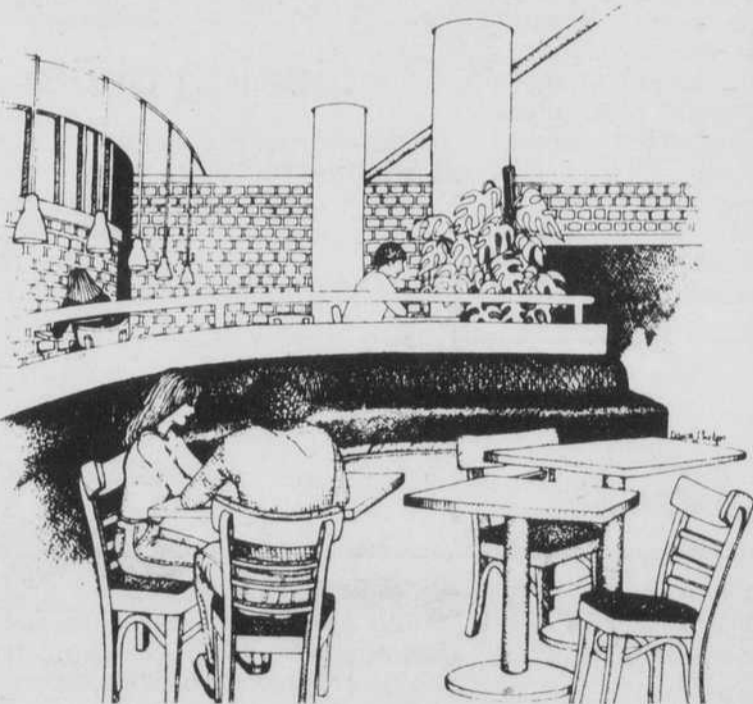
Legislative Happenings

House Bill 2456 - Gives campus police officers the authority of peace officers when on duty. (This gives campus police the authority to carry guns and make arrests.)

House Bill 2074 - Establishes state daycare financial aid for low-income undergraduate student parents with dependent children.

For further information on these and other student related Bills, contact Rich Wilkins or Chuck Pflieger at the ASUO office, Suite 4, EMU. Ext. 3724

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