

Federal lobbyist says nation should clean up toxic waste

By Linda Hahn
Of the Emerald

Prospects for getting what they wanted didn't look good. They had already suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Energy and Commerce Committee. They were outnumbered — eight environmental lobbyists to 122 industrial lobbyists, and the Public Works and Transportation Committee did not have strong environmental convictions.

So, Reid Wilson, lobbyist for Oregon State Public Interest Group decided to change lobbying strategies. Instead of employing the traditional lobbying tactics, Wilson asked the folks at home to write their representatives in support of a strong Superfund reauthorization bill.

"Lo and behold, it worked," Wilson told an audience of about 30 people in the EMU Dads' Room on Monday afternoon. "Public Works has done a good job."

His lecture, "Superfund: Will Congress Clean Up America," was sponsored by OSPERG.

The committee passed a bill that contained six of the seven points Wilson was pushing for in Superfund legislation. "Grassroots lobbying is the key to success," he said.

But the battle is far from over. While the Public Works and Transportation Committee passed a strong bill, the Energy and Commerce

Committee passed a weak one, Wilson said. One of the two bills, or a compromise bill to fund toxic waste cleanup, is scheduled to reach the floor of the House the week of Nov. 4.

Wilson is traveling throughout Oregon to garner the same grassroots support for an effective Superfund.

Superfund was established by Congress in 1980 to handle toxic waste emergencies and to clean up toxic waste dump sites. Funding for the project expired Sept. 30. Because renewal is floundering, the Environmental Protection Agency has slowed cleanup at 57 sites and laid off staff, Wilson said. He expects to see final legislation for funding sometime between Christmas and spring.

An effective final product is more important to Wilson than a quick passage of a weaker version. OSPERG has identified seven points that Wilson pushes during Superfund debates, which include increased funds and stronger commitments to cleaning up toxic waste dumps.

Wilson attributes ineffective management and insufficient funding to the EPA's poor cleanup record. In the last five years, only six sites of 812 on the EPA's National Priorities List have been cleaned.

Too much of the \$1.6 billion Superfund budget was dedicated to litigation and administrative costs, Wilson said. To avoid "falling flat on its face again," Wilson wants new legislation to require the EPA to begin cleanup of 150 new sites per year.

"If they're required to spend that much money on clean-up, they can't spend it on anything else, right?" he asked. Expired Superfund legislation has no such requirements.

Wilson suspects that three of the six cleaned-up sites are not actually clean because of inadequate final testing standards. When a site is considered clean, the EPA subjects the area to 25 chemical tests that measure the presence and the levels of toxicity.

OSPERG advocates an additional 100 tests. More money is needed because of the enormity of the toxic waste problem, Wilson said. "Twelve million people live within three miles of toxic waste dumps," he said.

They are drinking contaminated water and are being exposed to toxic, carcinogenic chemicals, he added.

While the EPA has estimated there are 2,000 toxic waste dumps in the country, the General Accounting Office has set the number at 400,000. "There are clearly more than we need," regardless of whose figures are used, Wilson said.

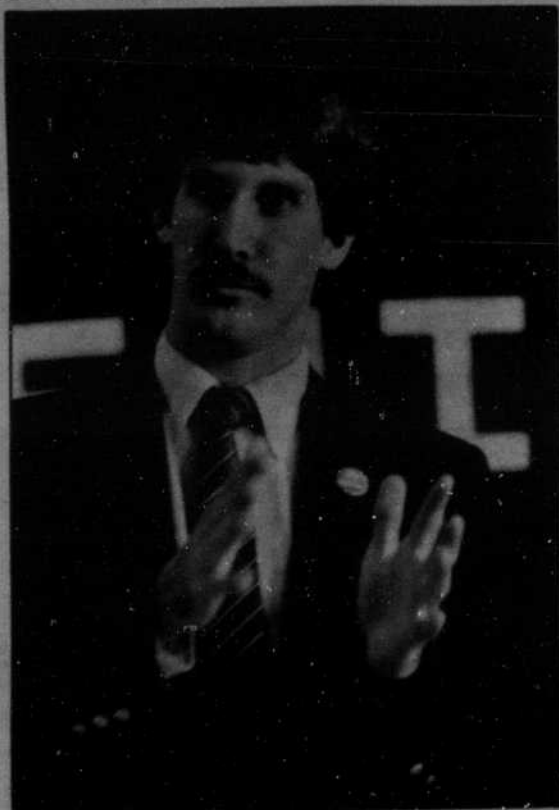


Photo by Shu-Shing Chen

Reid Wilson

Commentator signs 1985-86 contract

By Mary Lichtenwalner
Of the Emerald

The ASUO Executive and the Oregon Commentator shook hands over a new contract on Oct. 18, settling disagreement over last year's contract that led to the ASUO's attempt to freeze the paper's funds.

The ASUO said a contract negotiated between last year's editor Bob Davis and former ASUO President Julie Davis does not apply to Pinckney's administration. The contract outlined a budget agreement for the 1985-86 fiscal year.

After threatening to freeze the Commentator's incidental fee funds, the ASUO presented another contract to the Commentator. Editor Tom Mann said he is pleased with the new contract's similarity to the original contract.

"The contract she offered us was exactly the same as the one we signed last year," he said.

The Commentator had accused the ASUO of discrimination when the executive tried to single out the publication by asking it to adhere to affirmative action guidelines, Mann said.

The guidelines were included in an addition of stipulations to the contract. Such stipulations, however, are not required of other groups that have signed contracts with the ASUO.

"We disagree with that in principle. We don't hire, but if we did, we'd be an equal opportunity employer," Mann said. The Commentator's editor position is a non-paid, volunteer position.



The contract states that an ASUO representative must be on the publication's editor selection committee this spring. ASUO President Lynn Pinckney said that requirement was not clear in last year's contract.

Liability insurance also is listed, protecting the EMU, ASUO and the University from any legal problems should the Commentator be sued. The contract also states that a disclaimer must be printed in every issue.

"The constitution basically reflects, as best as we could, the feeling of last year's IFC," Pinckney said.

Pinckney said she denies any feelings of animosity toward the publication, although historically the ASUO's feelings toward the Commentator have been negative.

"I'd say our relations are better than they've ever been," she said. "It was more suspicion than reality — we never had a real desire to cut the Commentator's funding."

Former finance professor dies during vacation trip

Former University Finance Professor Don Watson died Oct. 21 in Reno, Nev., following a heart attack during a vacation trip.

Watson, 64, was stricken while enroute back from a vacation trip to Iowa with his wife. He died following heart bypass surgery.

Watson taught various business and finance courses at the University and was a former director of the University Bureau of Business and Economic Research.

He was a notable authority on Oregon's economy and published many articles about different aspects of the state's finances. He also had been widely quoted on the dangers of population growth and being too reliant upon technology as the solution to all economic and social problems.

Watson, who taught at the University from 1956 to 1983, was selected by the College of Business Administration in 1983 as outstanding teacher in the undergraduate program. He also received the Harry R. Jacobs Jr. Distinguished Teaching Award in 1983.

Prior to coming to Oregon, Watson taught at the University of Iowa, Iowa City; Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa; and Montana State University, Missoula.

Watson got his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Iowa and received his doctor of philosophy degree from Morningside College, Sioux City, Iowa.

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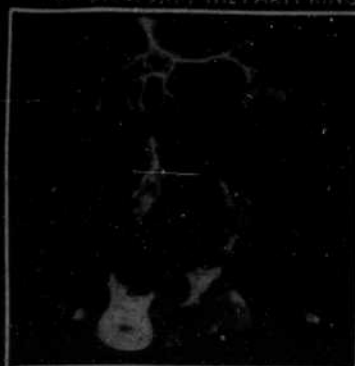
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