

Ban oil drilling off Oregon coastline

Oregon is a beautiful state. It isn't a tourist trap on the scale of a Florida or a California, yet it does attract people eager to take in all the state has to offer: acres of forest land, splendid mountain settings, and especially, miles of untouched coastline.

But the Oregon coast is threatened because oil lies beneath the ocean.

The U.S. Department of the Interior wants to sell leases for those oil deposits, starting in 1992. Production could begin as early as 2005. Opponents to oil drilling are already mustering troops for what looks to be a long and bitter fight.

By law, the Interior Department has to consult with the state governor before oil leases are put up for sale. They have to talk to the governor — but they don't have to listen to him. The governor has no power to veto the federal government's decision.

Depending on whom you talk to, the amount of oil off the coast of Oregon and Washington has a wide range. Some put it at as little as enough crude oil to take care of America's needs for just two days; others say there's more. But nobody is saying there is anything resembling a major oil deposit off the coast.

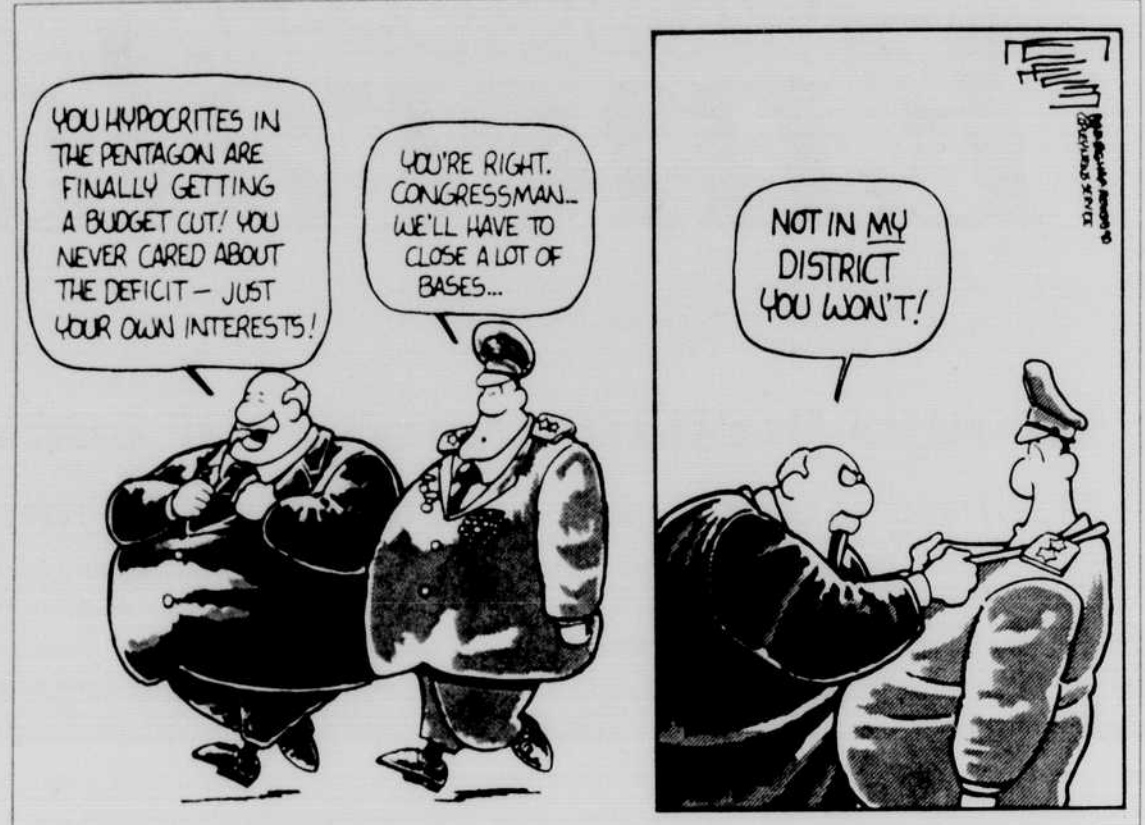
Oregon has had a long history of protecting its coastline. Past politicians have made sure natural habitats near the ocean were preserved. Now those preserves are threatened, and there's little the state's leaders can do to stop it.

Last year, the Oregon Legislature banned oil drilling within three miles of the coast. However, the deposits are farther out. There is nothing preventing whoever buys the leases in 1992 from going just outside the limit to drill for oil. Attempts to increase the ban to 12 miles have so far been unsuccessful.

The miniscule amount of oil just does not justify the risk oil drilling brings to Oregon. Accidents happen. Prince William Sound showed that. The Alaskan gulf in which the Exxon tanker dumped 10 million gallons of crude is sparsely populated, unlike here. A similar accident in Oregon would destroy the state's \$240 million fishing industry and do irreparable damage to tourism.

It is ironic that while discussion of the leases is going on, a tanker off the coast of Huntington Beach, Calif., lost 400,000 gallons of oil. Pictures from the popular California resort show miles of black-tainted sand. And this was a *minor* tanker accident. It could have been much worse.

Oregon doesn't need the oil drilling. The governor doesn't want it. The Legislature don't want it. The citizens don't want it. The Department of the Interior should reconsider and not sell the leases. It's just not worth the risk.



No big loss if Rohr proposal flies away

Eugene seems to consistently hit roadblocks with plans to diversify its economy. Proposals for new development often fold as soon as blueprints are unrolled. Last December, plans for a 10-story office tower were scrapped, and now, the possible arrival of an aerospace firm in town is under fire.

Rohr Industries last month announced plans to build a manufacturing plant near Mahlon Sweet Airport. The plant initially would provide 65 jobs, with employment of up to 250 after five years.

More jobs, diversified economy, prospects for the future — sounds like something the area needs. However, in the long run, this California-based jet engine parts manufacturer might be better off staying out of Eugene, and Eugene might be better off for it.

Although 75 percent of Rohr's business is for commercial jets, the company also makes parts for military aircraft including the Navy's F-14 fighter and flying tankers that refuel bombers in the air.

The F-14 has nuclear capabilities, and the tankers could be used to refuel bombers that carry nuclear weapons. Though Rohr does not manufacture nuclear weapons, it would have an indirect role in a process local voters have repeatedly opposed.

This has raised concern that Rohr's existence in Eugene could violate the city's nuclear-free status, which would be further strengthened if voters approve an initiative in May. This would mean the company could face a number of future legal challenges.

Whether Rohr would violate any part of Eugene's nuclear-free ordinance is not the only reason to be hesitant about their plans.

Federally protected wetlands in west Eugene could slow Rohr's plans, because the company would be required to create new wetlands elsewhere before anything is built on the site.

Finally, there's considerable concern regarding Rohr's legacy of carelessness, toxic dumping and pollution in previous endeavors. The company's poor track record in this regard and possibility for mishap here offsets the benefit of employing 65 Eugeniensians.

Perhaps city leaders would be better off encouraging the promotion of small local businesses to diversify the economy. Our city might not offer anything as breathtaking as an aerospace manufacturer, but our consciences, and our businesses, would be clean.

Letters

Blessing

I have been a resident of the dorms since fall of 1986. I feel that the new telephone system for the University is a blessing for the dorm residents.

For the past three years, I have noticed that somewhat more than 20 residents of a floor would share a pay phone and a campus phone which would be used to place off-campus calls. This system was very inconvenient because this required one to keep a supply of quarters available.

If one wanted to place a long distance call, one had to either use a calling card or call collect; both of these options are more expensive than calling the other party directly. Another inconvenience is that, due to the large number of residents sharing the floor phone, there is always a chance that the line would be busy if someone tries to call a resident of a certain floor.

With the phones being installed in the dorm rooms during spring break, many of our

old problems would be handled. We do not have to keep a supply of quarters just to make a local call on the pay phone, and a resident does not have to worry too much about the phone being monopolized when he/she is expecting a call. Like the many other dorm residents, I cannot wait to finally have a phone installed in my room.

Kent Hori
Student

Self-enslavement

A comprehensive collection of English author Percy Bysshe Shelley's prose writings including "Letter to Lord Ellenborough" (1813), "The Necessity of Atheism" (1811) and "Refutation of Deism" (1813) is currently available in reprint: *Shelley's Prose: Trumpet of a Prophecy*, edited by David Lee Clark with a preface by Yale University's Harold Bloom.

In "Letter to Lord Ellenborough," Shelley cites the injustice of Ellenborough, chief

justice of Britain who, in 1813, sentenced London publisher, David Isaac Eaton, to the pillory and 18 months imprisonment for blasphemy, for publishing Part 3 of Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason*.

Shelley reasoned individuals should not be found guilty for beliefs because beliefs are acquired involuntarily through a process of indoctrination and experience commencing at infancy.

An admirer of the American Revolution, Shelley, drawing on Locke and Hume, argued that while people cannot be blamed for views they hold, they have a responsibility to periodically place their most cherished beliefs to critical examination in the light of opposing argument. This assures progress in a democracy and deters violence precipitated by tyranny from an ignorant majority.

This understanding must be disseminated and encouraged throughout our present American public educational system where references to religion should be accompanied by fac-

tual historical exposition from an objective secular perspective — especially when it challenges and exposes irrational theist claims.

Nothing is more dangerous and harmful to the person and society than for people to be dissuaded from considering opposing arguments because they contradict "Holy Scripture."

Self-enslavement to the will of religious leaders is against the essence of democracy and presents a serious threat to it.

Bert Tryba
Eugene

Not condone

I am responding to Phil Zuckerman's letter titled "Angry" (ODE, Feb. 6).

You speak of anti-choice

hypocrisy, saying that we pseudo-moralists are organizing on streets with "witty little signs" and that if we were really convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that children were being slaughtered, we'd be wielding weapons to stop the slaughter.

May I point out the hypocrisy in that statement, Zuckerman? I believe that when someone says that they believe in the right to life, they believe in everyone's right to life.

That means we will peacefully attempt to save the lives of 4,000-plus children being slaughtered daily, and that we will not condone the slaughter of anyone, even those who are doing the slaughtering.

Susanne Kordich
Psychology

Letters Policy

The *Emerald* will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Comments must be factually accurate and refrain from personal attacks on the character of others.