

The tax tyrant

■ **OUR OPINION:** Bill Sizemore is spreading his anti-government gospel and squeezing out valuable programs along the way

He hates taxes, government and inefficient spending. He doesn't hold an official political office, but no single person has as much influence on the state of Oregon than he has had in recent years. He brought us the now infamous Measure 47 and the son-of-47, Measure 50. Worst of all, he's not even close to done.

Bill Sizemore, the anti-tax guru, is back in action with three new measures that propose to limit government and cut back on government spending. All three are more of the same from Sizemore — cutting government, spending and programs. When will it be enough for this guy? In his own words: "The war won't be over as long as government has the power to take money away from the people who earn it."

In other words, until there are no more taxes. Forget the fact that taxes fund our schools and communities or that they provide needed revenue for some pretty important government programs (public safety and transportation, just to name a few). It's pretty scary what Sizemore has done and hopes to do for Oregon. It's even scarier that he has been succeeding.

Sizemore's mission to limit the role of government has certainly gone too far with this latest round of measures. One completely eliminates Metro, Portland's regional government, calling it "an unnecessary layer of bureaucracy." Another requires the government to try and contract out services to private businesses whenever possible. And most controversial and potentially damaging is one measure that would set a spending limit on state and local government.

All these measures rest on the as-

sumption that cutting spending and government is always good. The fact is, this just isn't true. We have local government for a reason. We elect representatives to deal with day-to-day problems because the average citizen doesn't have the time or knowledge to do so. And as much as Sizemore doesn't want to believe it, we need taxes to run our government.

We know this, and so does everyone else. So why has Sizemore been so successful at pushing forth his anti-tax rhetoric? One reason is that he, for all his faults, is a great politician. He knows how to appeal to people's desires and convince them that his agenda is their own. Even when it isn't.

While most people do like less taxes, they also like the services their taxes provide. While Sizemore may not be satisfied until the police department is run like a private company, most people enjoy the universal protection the government provides. And while Sizemore may believe students should bear the full cost of a college education, most college students at least appreciate that the government helps subsidize their education.

Sizemore's popularity (though most people claim they don't have a "favorable" opinion of him) can't last forever. The thrill of paying a few bucks less in taxes will disappear as soon as people realize their favorite services are disappearing. We can only hope that when people finally realize that programs need money to run, Sizemore will quietly sulk away into another state.

Until then, it seems we'll just have to bear the Sizemore storm and hope when it ends the damage is not unreparable. And in the meantime, we can wait in fear for the day that Sizemore makes (and it seems likely he will) his bid for governor. Just imagine what kind of trouble he could cause then.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board.



Riverfront is a perfect example of planned development

The research park will develop the Eugene-Springfield area while sustaining a clean environment

The Emerald's recent three-part series on the development of the Riverfront Research Park, published May 19-21, highlights the need for thoughtful, reasoned consideration of the issue, backed with some important historical context.

The park has been controversial because it is located on land that some people want to maintain as "pristine" open space. In fact, the Riverfront site is anything but "pristine." It is a former commercial industrial area, parts of which have been used for a sand and gravel operation, an asphalt batch processing plant and a pole yard for a local utility.

In the late 1980s, the University and City of Eugene were able to change the zoning of this land from environmentally damaging industrial uses to a dedicated use for the Riverfront Research Park special development. The University and city

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have spent years cleaning it up, and are currently nearing completion of an ambitious environmental remediation of hazardous wastes detected in the area.

Does our community want the Riverfront Research Park? The question has already been answered by a public vote. In November 1988, after a four-year process which included intensive citizen study, comprehensive plan development, detailed citizen reviews of the plans, six public hearings, numerous public planning committee meetings and three community forums, the citizens of Eugene voted two-to-one to develop the park.

The Riverfront Research Park is a perfect example of planned, sustainable development:

■ It assists in diversifying the local economic base by encouraging the growth of knowledge-based industries; promotes "clean growth" by attracting non-pollut-

ing, research-based industrial tenants and creates family-wage jobs by drawing high-tech industries that require an educated and skilled work force.

■ It retains a green, park-like setting, including an extension of the University's arboretum and maintenance of the bike path.

■ It provides opportunities for research interaction between industry and the University. Close working relationships developed between industry and the University facilitate private sponsorship for research, an increasingly important element of research funding as the federal government cuts its support for basic research.

■ It creates additional financial opportunities for long-term University income from lease revenues, patents and licenses, and other sources.

■ It broadens the tax base, adds to the local economy and enhances the reputation, visibility and attractiveness of the Eugene-Springfield area as a desirable place to live, do business and conduct research.

As the University and the city proceed with planning for a new building at the Riverfront Research Park, I hope that we

all remember the years we've already spent debating this issue, and frame our memories with two simple facts. First, Eugene and Springfield will grow, by all estimates, at a very rapid rate. And second, we cannot hope to completely control this growth. The hard-won lessons of history and archaeology show that the best any community has ever been able to achieve is planned development.

People and businesses will come, attracted by the same conditions we all find so appealing here. We can, however, try to create the kinds of development that will make Eugene and Springfield different from other rapidly growing areas.

The Riverfront Research Park illustrates how the community and the University, through careful, cooperative planning, can help bring knowledge-based, family-wage jobs to town while keeping our community clean and green.

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