

GUEST EDITORIAL FROM THE BEND BULLETIN

On Oregon motorists not pumping their own gas

In almost every other place in the country, people have the freedom to pump their own gas. In Oregon, not so much.

A bill in the Legislature, House Bill 3194, would loosen Oregon's rules. It would allow self-service at gas stations, as long as it is not at more than 25 percent of the pumps.

The bill should pass, but there must be a good reason why the state of Oregon has been so reluctant to allow people to pump their own. Right? Perhaps Oregonians are less gifted than people in other states. Or maybe Oregonians are more flammable?

We looked it up. Oregon actually has 17 official reasons enshrined in state law to oppose self-serve gas. Here are some highlights:

In Oregon Revised Statutes 480.235, the solons in our Legislature have declared Oregon's weather to be "uniquely adverse." The ice in this state is presumably more slippery. The rain is more wet. The sun is shinier. The clouds are cloudier. It can feel like it some days — that's for sure. But the Legislature has declared the weather here is uniquely adverse, so it must be a bona fide, scrupulously researched fact.

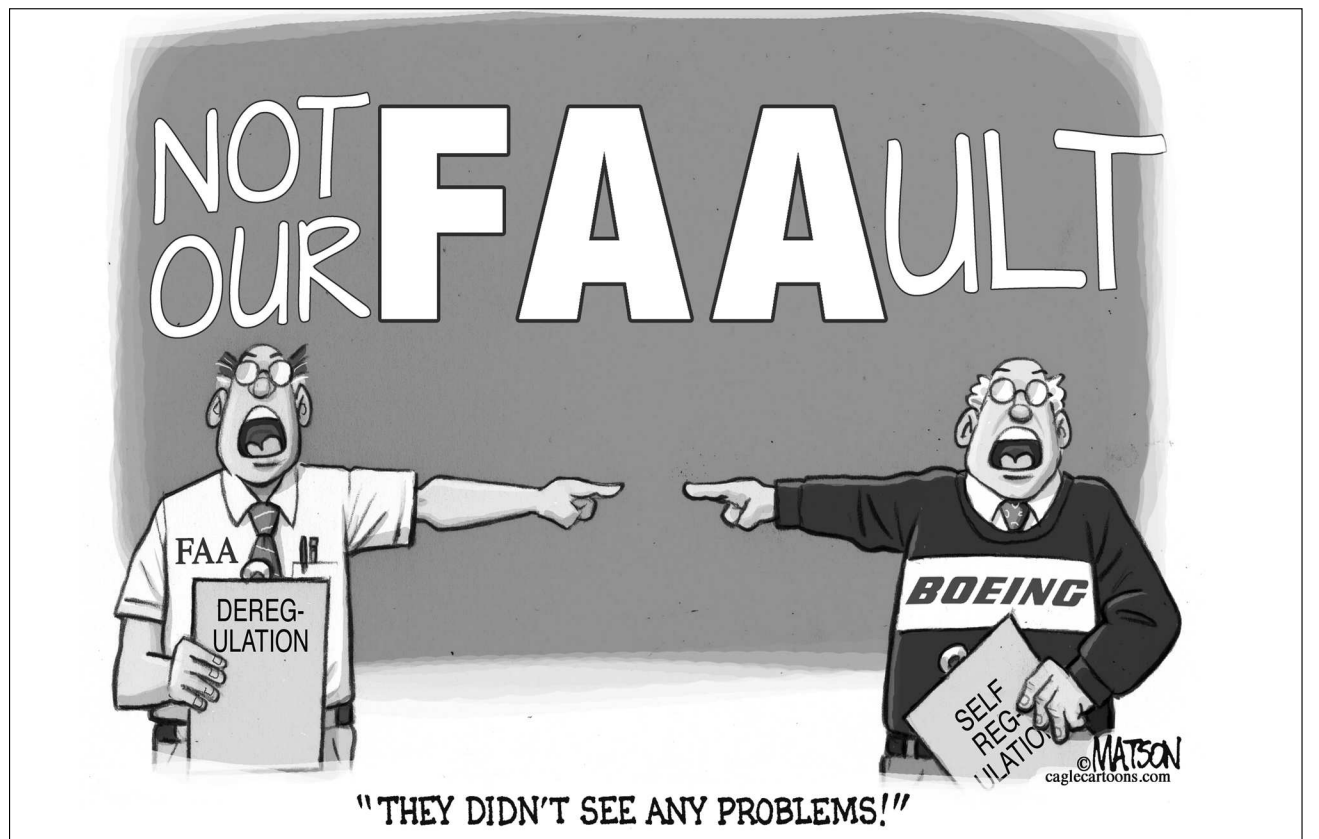
The law explains Oregon's uniquely adverse weather causes "wet pavement and reduced visibility." And there is "the increased risk of personal injury resulting from slipping on slick surfaces."

Somehow, people in other states can deal with wet pavement and reduced visibility when pumping their own. Thank you oh wise Legislature, for protecting us.

The state also warns that self-service may lead to exposure to gas fumes, representing a health hazard to customers. We suppose it's much healthier for attendants to be exposed to gas fumes repeatedly, all the workday long than for customers to get an occasional whiff when they fill up.

There are some other reasons the state lists that do make some sense. For instance, there are other safety issues, though, once again, people in other states manage just fine. Self-service pumps may also cost more to insure and that could be passed on to consumers. Of course, gas stations would not need as many attendants, so that may reduce costs to consumers. It is further undeniable that people who are disabled or elderly could find it difficult to pump their own gas. Surely legislators can put their heads together and come up with a regulation to deal with that. Here's a hint: full serve.

One last thought about Oregon's "uniquely adverse" weather: If the weather in Oregon is really so bad, why on earth is the state not including "uniquely adverse" weather warnings in ads luring tourists to Oregon? Somebody tell Visit Bend.



Your views

Zinni: Legislature shouldn't fund Wallowa Dam fixes

To the Editor:
I am concerned about the Wallowa Lake Dam improvement proposed by Gov. Kate Brown that will be voted on soon.

I agree with rehabilitating the dam for several reasons, such as safety for people and equitable water distribution for irrigators. It has the potential to help many irrigators and store more water.

It also has the potential of making the newly formed irrigation district a lot more money. My concern is that perhaps more than \$16 million will be provided to the Irrigation District to get the dam to store more water, which the district will sell. I believe the money from water sales would go to the district.

If this is good for the county as a whole, great. However, I don't think Oregon taxpayers should have to pay money to help just a local few. If it is a good idea to fund the project, do it as a loan to be paid back with receipts from water sold.

I don't agree with funding west side projects

with my tax dollars. I also don't agree with asking the whole state to fund a project that benefits only a few and may provide a profit to a private entity. Don't beg the Legislature to fund your activities. Agree to a loan and pay it back.

I have contacted Sen. Bill Hansel and Rep. Greg Barreto on this and encourage any who agree to do the same. Do we want to help reduce or increase state debt problems?

Joseph T. Zinni Sr.
Joseph

Follis: Eastern Oregon needs more registered Republicans

To the Editor:
I have been pondering the great article written some weeks ago by Rep. Greg Barreto. I learned a great deal from it and would like to comment on this.

First, we need to give him all the support we can. It only takes a minute to email, write a note or make a call.

Second, we will never make any changes in our

government, laws, taxes, schools or representation in the state Legislature as long as there is such a huge difference in the amount of Republican versus Democratic registered voters. If we Eastern Oregonians are serious about change, we need to get busy and get our friends and neighbors registered. We need to talk up what the Republican Party can do for them.

There have been dramatic changes already under President Trump, even though our Democratic friends do not want to admit this. And 2020 is just around the corner. If we do not get the House back, we will lose our country as we knew it. Infanticide could be the law of the land. I shudder to think what health care could become.

We need to be kind when we debate these things. No shouting, no four-letter words, no violence, no in your face. We are supposed to be a civilized, cultured, kind people who care about each other. You don't solve anything with rudeness. You don't win anyone over with crudeness.

Write to us

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Observer welcomes letters to the editor. Letters are limited to 350 words and must be signed and carry the author's address and phone number (for verification purposes only). Email your letters to news@lagrandeobserver.com or mail them to La Grande Observer, 1406 5th St., La Grande, 97850.

Please remember that you're in control when it comes to all elected officials. They work for you. Pick up that phone, often, and tell them when you do agree or don't agree. Ask them questions. Most of them do listen. Volunteer when they have events so that you get to know them. I did and found it rewarding.

Carole Follis
La Grande

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