

**OUR VIEW**

## No good reason for appeal

The La Grande City Council had little choice in deciding Wednesday night to allow the Union County Warming Station to open. Oregon's land use laws meant the council could consider only certain criteria in deciding to uphold or deny the appeal on the station's conditional use permit.

Even that was a bit confusing. Supporting the appeal meant opposing the opening of the station. Denying the appeal meant wanting it to open.

The city planning commission already unanimously voted to allow the station the conditional use of the building at 2008 Third St. to house the homeless and others in need during cold winter nights. Finding reason to overturn the vote from the city's own commission would be a high bar. And appeal supporters could not make a sufficient enough case for the shelter having serious adverse effects on the neighborhood.

Thus the 7-0 vote to deny had the look of the inevitable.

But this is where walking the line of public policy intersects with helping people who need help and need it now. And Al Adelsberger, the man who filed the appeal to the council, should not appeal the council's decision to the state Land Use Board of Appeals.

Adelsberger and other appeal supporters admitted during the course of the public hearing that La Grande needs to do something to help the homeless. They just do not agree a downtown shelter is it.

But it is.

If you gash your hand wide open on a kitchen knife, you grab a cloth, towel or something to help stop the bleeding. And then you go to the hospital's emergency room for help.

The shelter serves as that stop gap for people without a home. Dwight Johnson, who oversees the warming station in Pendleton, put it this way: "Our mission is to keep them from freezing to death."

Shelter supporters are working to do just that here in La Grande.

But that does not stop anyone from working on the bigger picture Adelsberger pointed out the community needs, including transitional housing and more vocational training.

Mayor Steve Clements stepped up and admitted he and the rest of the city council should have long ago taken leadership roles in this pressing issue. He promised to get involved and work toward a more comprehensive solution.

Adelsberger and others passionate about this should take Clements up on his commitment. Adelsberger obviously knows how to organize support for a cause, and he carries enough clout to hold the mayor and the rest of the council accountable if they don't come through.

He and others should apply their skills to help make the warming station and the programs it offers the best they can be. They should work it out here, at the local level, and not waste more time with an appeal to the state.



**OTHER VIEWS**

## Trump should veto greedy Green Act

In a mad dash to expand all their favorite "green" cash grabs before the end of the year, House Democrats have published their most bloated smash and grab yet.

They call it the Green Act, but a better name might be the Greed Act. The bill extends wind and solar subsidies — which we've been promised for decades would be temporary — for yet another five years. In an effort to gain support from farm states, it revives the biodiesel credit.

Most outrageously, the Green Act cancels the phase-out of the electric vehicle subsidies by tripling the per-manufacturer cap. It also ignores rampant fraud and creates a new subsidy for used electric vehicles, despite the fact the original rationale — dependence on foreign oil — is now completely obsolete.

Because no green cash grab would be compete without lavishing taxpayer dollars on the campus left, the bill includes an eye-popping \$5 billion in grants for university "environmental justice" programs. Shameless.

With Nancy Pelosi firmly in control, the Green Act could well pass the House, either by itself or more likely as part of a larger year-end package. So the real fight looks likely to be in the Senate, where Minority Leader Chuck Schumer can be expected to go to the mat for the electric vehicles subsidies, if not the whole package. In fact, he recently proposed an electric-vehicles-subsidies-meets-cash-for-clunkers on steroids concept that would pay to scrap every internal combustion vehicle in the country in the most brazen display of wealth destruction via central planning ever attempted outside of the Communist Bloc. So he can be expected, at a minimum, to push hard for the House language on electric vehicles.

That language would triple the cap on subsidies of \$200,000 per manufacturer — which has already



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been reached by Tesla and GM, who of course have unleashed armies of lobbyists to keep the taxpayer largesse flowing. A token cut in the credit amount from \$7,500 to \$7,000 would be meaningless, thanks to a new credit of up to \$2,500 for used electric vehicles.

This program is an almost pure tax break for the rich, and those rich are well represented by their Democratic representatives and senators. Especially from California, which gets nearly half of all the subsidies dollars, and New York, which ranks second.

The Pacific Research Institute looked at IRS data and found that more than half of the electric car buyers claiming the credit make more than \$200,000 per year and nearly 80% make more than \$100,000. Just 1% make \$50,000 or less.

Worse, a significant number of the predominantly wealthy people claiming the credit are doing so fraudulently. The Treasury Inspector General found in a new report that 16,510 tax returns claiming "potentially erroneous" electric vehicle tax credits, totaling \$73.8 million. The IRS doesn't check VINs, and it looks like credits have been allowed for ineligible vehicles. It also appears there is a particular problem with leased vehicles, in which the leasing company claims the credit and builds it into the lease payment, but then the lessee claims the credit a second time, effectively doubling the subsidy.

The simplest way to end the fraud would be to let the program phase out as scheduled. But Congress looks at rampant fraud and instead wants to expand the program. Unreal.

Nothing in the Green Act deserves to see the light of day in the Senate, especially the expansion of electric vehicle

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tax breaks. But if it does, President Trump should make clear that he'll have his veto pen ready.

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