

OUR VIEW

Oregon's single-payer plan won't cover this type of care

When you hear that Oregon might move to a single-payer, state-run health plan, you may think: Yes!

Every Oregonian would get health care coverage and the same level of coverage. Equity and quality might go up. Overall costs may be held down. You would pay taxes instead of health care premiums.

That's the kind of plan the state's Joint Task Force on Universal Health Care is supposed to develop. It met again Thursday, Jan. 27, taking another step toward its goal of submitting a Health Care for All Oregon Plan to the Legislature by September 2022.

Is Oregon going to make such a momentous shift in health care? Should skeptical Oregonians, health insurers, pharmaceutical companies and others be nervous?

We can't answer that. We are just going to slice off one piece of this issue. That's a form of care that the plan won't cover: long-term services and supports.

Long-term services and supports encompasses medical and nonmedical care provided to people who are not able to do things for themselves, such as cook, dress, bathe or make it to the bathroom. The harsh reality is that while people can need that at any stage of life, Medicare and most health insurance do not pay for it. People need to "spend down" their assets to where they have very little left and keep their assets low to be eligible for government assistance. Buying additional insurance can help.

That harsh reality would continue under an Oregon single-payer plan, at least as the task force discussed on Jan. 27. They even deleted language from their proposed recommendation to the Legislature that highlighted the issue. Struck from the recommendation was this sentence: "Oregonians who are not eligible for LTSS benefits will continue to 'spend down' assets before becoming eligible."

Task force members weren't trying to hide what they were doing. It is just not something Oregon's single-payer plan would do. It's a state of affairs in health care that isn't going to change.

No state that has been developing a single-payer plan has found a simple way to cover long-term services. They have all struggled with it, as Oregon's task force is. If the government started paying for that type of long-term care, it would increase health care costs substantially for any new health system because substantial parts of it aren't covered now.

It might be that an Oregon single-payer plan would cover long-term services and supports at some point in the future. For now it's important to note that a type of care that many Oregonians may need at some point in their lives would not be covered by the Health Care for All Oregon Plan.

EDITORIALS

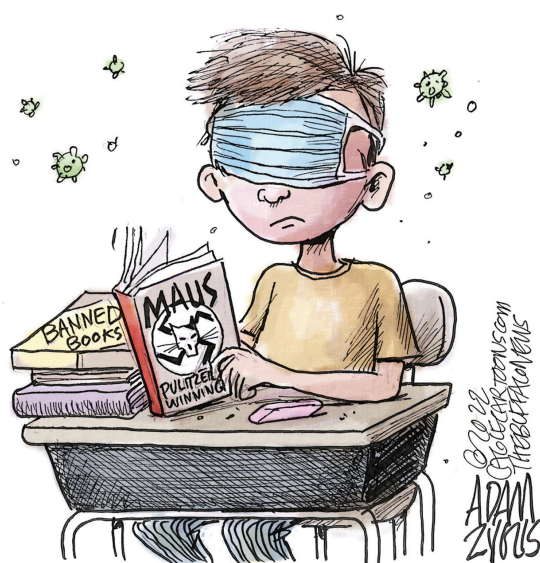
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PROMOTING MASKS IN SCHOOLS?

The Left...



The Right...



Demand that Idaho Power stop bullying local landowners



JIM KREIDER
OTHER VIEWS

"Please speak out. Contact your elected officials and demand that Idaho Power stop bullying and harassing landowners."

— Jim Kreider, co-chair of the Stop B2H Board of Directors

Idaho Power, an out-of-state regulated energy monopoly, is attempting to build a 300-mile, 500-kilovolt transmission line through five Eastern Oregon counties. It is called the Boardman to Hemingway (B2H) transmission line, an unneeded and destructive project that threatens our land and heritage.

Idaho Power has started taking landowners to circuit court to gain access to their land for pre-construction surveys. This is for pre-condemnation proceedings (aka eminent domain) — for a transmission line that has not been approved.

The B2H application is still under consideration; more specifically, it is in a contested case that needs to be resolved before final consideration and decisions are made by the Oregon Department of Energy's Energy Facility Siting Council. This is not expected until summer or later this year. There could even be more court challenges before a final decision is made.

Obviously, Idaho Power's pre-condemnation process is premature. It ignores the established state process for conducting pre-construction surveys.

The ODOE process allows for "over-the-fence" surveys should the landowner choose not to allow utilities' agents on their property. The

Stop B2H Coalition has communicated with ODOE to learn the relevant regulations regarding access to private property. Idaho Power and its attorneys chose to bypass the established ODOE processes and are taking private landowners to court using methods that are inconsistent with ODOE's proposed order.

To date, at least 21 landowners have or will be served a petition for precondemnation entry on their property. Eventually, there will be more. How can we sit back and watch this invasion of private property and potential land taking happen to our neighbors and friends?

Idaho Power has the financial resources to bully people, to publish slick materials to convince Oregonians that the B2H is a done deal, to make grandiose promises of tax revenues to counties, to employ attorneys and engineers to twist words and counter everything that people, including our local scientists, raise. They relentlessly "greenwash" the project, which is not green at all.

The B2H application should be suspended until Idaho Power ceases its precondemnation court proceedings and follows the procedures in the proposed order. Condemnation or precondemnation should

not occur until a site certificate is issued, which gives permission to build the line. At that point, if that happens, there is an established process for condemnation or eminent domain that Idaho Power will need to follow.

Please speak out. Contact your elected officials and demand that Idaho Power stop bullying and harassing landowners. We sent this letter to elected officials, citing the rules: <https://bit.ly/legis-ltr>. Idaho Power has a bad reputation. This has been clear since they built the Hells Canyon Dam complex without the promised fish ladders, and it has resurfaced and intensified with the B2H transmission line.

Stop B2H Coalition is made up of passionate people from all walks of life and politics. We have joined forces and commented on every step in the decision making and permitting processes (federal and state) since 2007 as individuals and 2016 as a coalition. We have been steadfast and professional in our well-researched filings against the B2H documenting countless errors and outdated studies in their application and analyses.

Jim Kreider is the co-chair of the Stop B2H Board of Directors. Kreider is a resident of La Grande.

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Phone:
541-963-3161

Toll free (Oregon):
1-800-781-3214

Email:
news@lagrandeobserver.com

POSTMASTER
Send address changes to:
The Observer,
911 Jefferson Ave.,
La Grande, OR 97850

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