

OUR VIEW

# Buying peace in the Legislature not a long-term solution

Walkouts and slowdowns have been features of recent Oregon legislative sessions. This time around we have thankfully seen only slowdowns.

New House Speaker Dan Rayfield, D-Corvallis, is trying something novel. He offered Republicans a slice of the state's unexpected extra revenue to divvy up themselves. It's \$100 million.

"There's absolutely no strings attached," Rayfield said. "This is not an exchange for anything. This is about making meaningful change in communities across this state."

Rep. Greg Smith, R-Heppner, was one of four lawmakers tasked with creating a plan for the money.

"I believe the speaker of the House is saying, 'Let's see if there's a better approach to public policy, one where we can all communicate together.' It's refreshing," Smith told OPB.

Smith said that initially lawmakers thought the goodwill gesture was some sort of payout.

"After initial conversations and once folks had a chance to better understand what this approach was about, I think more folks came along," he said of a meeting in which House and Senate Republicans discussed the idea.

In a way, this peace offering is good. Democrats have control of the House, the Senate and the governor's office. Republicans have felt like they are ignored and resorted to slowdowns and walkouts. The money could help smooth over some of the differences.

"We're all committed to make sure that rural Oregon has the things it needs to progress," said state Sen. Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, D-Portland, one of the state's top budget writers, when asked about the package. "I'll be honest with you. I think we're making investments that are more than \$100 million."

But in another way it's disappointing. It hints that a functioning Legislature can only be bought with money. What then happens in the next downturn?

Smith, the House Republican budget lead, said this is an approach unlike any he's seen. He's just not sure it will help heal relationships in Salem.

"I would hope it moves us a step closer," he said, adding: "You're always going to have folks who are skeptical."



YOUR VIEWS

### Use nonlethal practices on wolves and coyotes

We are a rural, hunting family and would never kill a wolf or a coyote. Research in several states has proven wolves and coyotes prefer to eat wild game. Destroying their family structures leads to increased livestock predation. So we buy beef only from ranchers that use predator-friendly practices, available locally.

Currently before the state Legislature are two bills: House Bill 4080 authorizes creation of "predator damage control districts" to pay the controversial "Wildlife Services" program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to kill Oregon's wildlife deemed a threat to private property, without having to use or consider nonlethal methods. End of year 2020, this program killed 201,606 native wildlife in Oregon.

HB 4127 requests an additional \$1 million on the heels of \$400,000 from the Legislature, just last year, to be paid into the current Wolf Compensation Fund. This fund was established to support nonlethal prevention methods and compensate rancher losses. These funds have been misused to supply livestock

managers with "tools" such as telemetry equipment tuned to wolf radio collars and ATVs used in state-issued kill orders. "Coexistence" doesn't mean deputizing these compensated livestock managers to hunt down state-protected wildlife.

Before handing out any tax candy, the political arm of the livestock industry needs to prove the same success as individual ranchers. The largest sheep operation in Idaho has proven such success. Even after initial skepticism, the most cost-effective protection of their business is nonlethal methods over killing programs or reimbursement fund programs. See link to film: [wildlifecoexistence.org/the-wood-river-wolf-project](http://wildlifecoexistence.org/the-wood-river-wolf-project).

Killing everything in order to do our human business is not the future we want to hand our children.

Susan Strass Bend

### Time to restore energy independence

Time to wake up, America. Things have to change. What we see happening in Ukraine is unconscionable.

Since becoming a player of some significance on the oil and petrochem-

ical scene, Putin has decided to flex his muscles and he needs to be reminded he is not invincible. One way to do that is to hit him in the pocketbook. Every time we fill our tanks with gas, we contribute to his war chest.

Why are we still buying Russian oil? Oh, right, now I remember, someone higher up decided we Americans should quit being energy independent, quit producing so much oil at home and buy Russian. By doing so we have aided and abetted — and still are by the way — Ukraine's desperate situation.

We should not be begging Russia or OPEC to sell us more oil, we should be petitioning our politicians to do their job and demand the restoration of drilling operations and the opening up of the Keystone Pipeline work here in America immediately, creating American jobs and American profit. America could be exporting oil and gas to the EU.

Please, folks, write to your representatives and senators. Time for us "little people" to make our voices heard! Stand up for American Made, America.

Darrell and Rose Howe Monument

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