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Opinion

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OUR VIEW

Regulators only seek more regulation

Nature and regulators abhor a vacuum. Where no regulation exists, government moves in to fill the void. And where there is regulation, regulators find reason to justify more.

Dairymen and livestock producers are trying to assess the impacts of a move by the Washington Department of Ecology to expand permitting requirements that now cover 10 confined animal feeding

operations to hundreds of dairies and other farms that use manure storage lagoons.

The permits set out what producers must do to keep manure from washing into surface water, regulating the size, design and maintenance of lagoons.

Under the new proposal, which Ecology officials described as a "preliminary draft," the department turns its attention to groundwater, as well.

DOE assumes lagoons leak manure into groundwater, so any producer with a lagoon will need a CAFO permit. Plus, the producer would have to test fields on which manure is spread. Soil samples down to 3 feet deep will have to be taken. The higher the contaminant level, the stronger the action the producer will have to take to clean up the ground.

"This changes the universe in which an operator lives," Washington Cattleman's

Association Executive Vice President Jack Field said.

Indeed. Permits will cost anywhere between \$263 to \$2,373 per year, depending on the size of the operation, and will have to be updated when the size of the covered herd changes.

The regular field testing will be expensive as well.

We are assured by DOE that the rules are still in the early stages, and that there will be "months" of public comment before final rules

are written.

Although happy DOE is expanding its reach, environmental groups say the proposed rules don't go far enough. They promise to use the rulemaking process to press for even more strict rules.

So, there will be new, more inclusive rules. The only thing left to be decided is their degree.

Once a regulatory agency decides to expand its authority, there's nothing that will come out of months of public comment that will change its mind.



Rik Dalvit/For the Capital Press

OUR VIEW

Congress must pass PORTS bills

While most of the public has forgotten the months-long slowdown at West Coast container ports, farmers, ranchers, processors and agricultural exporters have not.

They are still paying the price for the foolishness inflicted on them by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and the Pacific Maritime Association.

While the two sides were locked in a slow-motion Kabuki dance negotiating a new five-year contract, the ILWU choreographed a work slowdown that continued into the new year. Shipments were stopped or delayed and stacks of containers filled with agricultural goods piled up on the docks.

The Port of Portland lost its last major container carrier in part because of the nonsense. That means exporters who used that port have to pay extra to go through the ports of Seattle and Tacoma.

While the ILWU and management were hassling with one another, customers in Asia were buying meat, potatoes, hay, nuts and produce elsewhere.

Once the new port contract was signed, U.S. ag goods arrived overseas, but many of them sat in storage because their purchasers have already bought

replacement goods from other countries.

Hay from the 2014 crop is still working its way through the system in Japan. Meat had to be frozen, lowering its value, to make it to overseas customers because port workers were so slow. A record apple crop was hung up as containers sat at West Coast ports. Potato products were stranded. Christmas trees were late.

But there's a bigger problem facing agriculture. In 4 1/2 years, when this ILWU contract expires, agricultural exporters will find themselves in precisely the same predicament — losing massive amounts of money because of a broken system that puts them at risk while the port operators and ILWU engage in more brinkmanship.

We have previously called on Congress to do something to avoid a repeat of the port debacle. Bills introduced in the U.S. House and Senate could help.

H.R. 3398, introduced Aug. 5, is a companion measure to S. 1519. They are known as the Protecting Orderly and Responsible Transit of Shipments (PORTS) Act and would allow governors in West Coast states to put the spurs to port operators and longshore workers who impede the free flow of containers through the ports.

The governors would be authorized to appoint a board of inquiry under the Taft-Hartley Act and seek an injunction if the president doesn't act in 10 days to end a work slowdown or strike.

The House bill also tells the comptroller general to study what went wrong in the recent debacle and propose ways to avoid a repeat.

No doubt big labor will resist these efforts. Tough. Until the ILWU and the port operators write checks indemnifying their customers for the huge losses they suffered, we're not really interested in their opinions.

U.S. exporters and importers paid dearly for last winter's shenanigans. The slowdown cost the U.S. economy up to \$2.5 billion per day, damaged the U.S. economy and cost American jobs.

We as a nation simply cannot afford to allow our businesses and our economy to be hijacked by another union squabble. Reps. Dan Newhouse and Dave Reichert, both of Washington, have already signed on as sponsors of the House bill. Every member of every West Coast congressional delegation should follow suit and sign on as sponsors of the PORTS Act and push hard for their passage.

If they don't, then we'll know for sure where their allegiances lie.

There's a better response to EPA climate rules than 'Just say no'

By BOB INGLIS and MARK REYNOLDS
For the Capital Press

The Republican talking point on climate change is evolving, thankfully, from "I'm not a scientist" to "let's solve it through innovation," and that is good news for the nation and generations of Americans to come. After all, the first step to solving a problem is to admit that you have one, and that's now happening.

Another candidate, Carly Fiorina, offered a similar observation: "I think the answer to this problem is innovation, not regulation."

It's a very nuanced position. In one breath they acknowledge there's a problem we must solve and attack the regulatory solution currently leaving the station. There's just one problem: Suggesting that innovation without market reform will solve climate change is more wishful thinking than a serious policy proposal.

The truth is that we cannot afford to wait for "a person in a garage" to come up with a magic bullet. The technologies that can wean society off polluting fuels already exist. What we need is the economic — money talks — to bring those technologies to scale.

To be sure, there are technologies yet to be invented that will have a game-changing impact on our ability to undo the damage accrued from burning fossil fuels the past two centuries. But investors are more likely to fund the research and development for these new technologies if they are assured a market that values them and thus a reasonable return on their investment.

What would give them such assurance? A predictable, steadily-rising fee on carbon pollution.

For those who worry that pricing carbon will drag down our economy, here's the other part of the equation: Return the revenue from the carbon fee back to the people, either through direct payments or by lowering taxes.

A study from the highly respected Regional Economic Models Inc. (REMI), looked at this type of policy, factoring in an annual increase of \$10 per ton on the carbon dioxide content of fossil fuels. REMI found that after 20 years emissions would be reduced by 52 percent. More impressive, though, was that the policy would add 2.8 million jobs over 20 years because of the carbon fee revenue being recycled into the

Guest comment
Mark Reynolds



Guest comment
Bob Inglis



economy. Leading conservatives like George Shultz, Secretary of State under President Reagan, have endorsed this solution, calling it an "insurance policy" against the risk — whatever it may be — posed by climate change.

Now that President Barack Obama has released the new EPA regulations to reduce carbon emissions at power plants, conservatives will step up opposition to a plan they view as big-government overreach. Expect lawsuits, threats of a government shut down and heated rhetoric on the presidential campaign trail.

Do opponents really want or need to go down this path? In previous stand-offs, public opinion proved very harsh for the GOP. With opinion polls showing two-thirds of Americans supporting the new EPA rules, attacking the rules seems like a strategy that's all risk and no reward.

The problem is that congressional Republicans haven't come to the table on the climate issue, and if you're not at the table, you're on the menu. By not being engaged, the GOP has ceded climate change policy to an executive branch that is imposing more government regulations, the least desirable solution Republicans can imagine.

But just saying "no" to EPA regulations is not a viable option, either politically or environmentally. Why not, then, offer an alternative solution that adheres to conservative values? Tell the American people, "We have an effective solution that ..."

Uses the power of the free market, rather than the government, to drive both innovation and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Does not increase the size and control of government.

Protects American businesses and grows our economy.

As Republicans cast about for a new talking point on climate change, the ones who come to the table with a revenue-neutral plan to price carbon will eventually be hailed as visionaries, preservers of a livable world, and saviors of their party.

One of them might even win the White House.

Bob Inglis is a former Republican congressman from South Carolina who now directs republicEn.org, a think tank promoting free-market energy and climate policies. Mark Reynolds is executive director of Citizens' Climate Lobby.

Readers' views

Another reason to preserve farmland

Concerning the Capital Press article, "Researchers: Replenish aquifers by flooding fields in winter," on Aug. 4:

American Farmland Trust finds it noteworthy that the areas identified by University of California-Davis researchers as the most suitable for active groundwater recharge are farmlands near cities that are expanding. To accommodate growing populations, these cities are paving

over the very land that could be the key to the future water supply of both agriculture and the cities themselves. This is documented by the San Joaquin Valley Greenprint report (p. 27), which shows the coincidence of prime farmland and aquifer recharge areas in that region.

Importantly, this research provides yet another compelling reason to conserve these irreplaceable farmlands.

Edward Thompson, Jr.
California director
and senior associate
American Farmland Trust
Sacramento

Spotted owl an environmental fraud

I read your opinion on the spotted owl. How sad that our ag paper is sucked into environmental nonsense. The spotted owl has always been a fraud. Now you are telling us that you believe the nonsense that we should kill other better surviving owls to protect what was never a problem in the first place.

So you are saying we should stop the natural process of succession to save a weak bird. The only part of what we teach

about science and nature that is true, is that some animals of a species will be better suited to survive over time and others will decline. How dare you say that we should interrupt that process of natural selection.

This is the perfect time to have said what has always been true, the spotted owl was always a hoax to stop logging, nothing more than a furry friend to use as a tool.

The owl should be delisted and our forests brought back to health before they all burn up.

Liz Turner
The Dalles, Ore.