

Editorials are written by or approved by members of the Capital Press Editorial Board.

All other commentary pieces are the opinions of the authors but not necessarily this newspaper.

# Opinion

## Editorial Board

Publisher  
Mike O'Brien

Editor  
Joe Beach

Managing Editor  
Carl Sampson

opinions@capitalpress.com

Online: www.capitalpress.com/opinion

## OUR VIEW

# Another example of a federal agency operating by fiat

We've grown used to regulators in the Obama administration taking arbitrary, heavy-handed action, so we weren't surprised to hear another agency has come under scrutiny.

But we were a bit surprised to hear the charges are being leveled at Miles McEvoy, the head of the National Organic Program, by the same organizations that sang his praises when he was appointed to run the program in 2009.

McEvoy has a long resume in the organics industry. He was Washington state's first organic inspector. He was running that state's organics program when he was tapped by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to lead the

national program.

Advocacy groups were thrilled. They believed they had a true believer at the helm who would uphold the integrity of the program and keep it ideologically pure.

Six years later, some of those same organizations are facing off against McEvoy in federal court over his administration of the program.

Among the 14 plaintiffs were the Cornucopia Institute, the Organic Consumers Association and the environmental groups Center for Food Safety, Beyond Pesticides and Food & Water Watch.

At issue is McEvoy's decision to change the decision-making

process for which synthetic substances are allowed to remain in organic production. The lawsuit claims the USDA violated administrative law by implementing the new rule without public comment.

Separate from the lawsuit, critics say McEvoy is keeping secret the names of experts the program uses to formulate policy, has failed to vigorously enforce regulations and punish violators, and — the greatest of all sins — is acting at the behest of large corporations that want to capitalize on the growing popularity of organics.

Critics say McEvoy's policies seem aimed at removing obstacles to the way he wants to run the

National Organic Program, such as when he disbanded a key policy-setting committee, stripped the National Organic Standards Board of the ability to set its own agenda and otherwise undermined the board's authority.

"We have a government agency operating by fiat," Jay Feldman, executive director of Beyond Pesticides, told the Capital Press.

Not just one. That fairly describes much of the Obama administration of the last seven years, particularly those agencies known and feared by farmers and ranchers. The Environmental Protection Agency's water regulations and

the Labor Department's "hot goods" thuggery come to mind.

Those agencies — and many others, no doubt — are filled with true believers who aren't going to let rules, regulations or even the Constitution get in the way of doing what they see as the Lord's work.

Government agencies are bound by the law, and are not a law unto themselves. That's true whether they work for a Republican or a Democrat in the White House.

While we don't agree when it comes to large-scale organic farming operations, we agree with the plaintiffs as they press the government to follow procedures and maintain transparency.

## OUR VIEW

# BLM poser should be fired for online comments

The Bureau of Land Management has identified an employee who used a government computer to impersonate a former coworker and post comments on an article on capitalpress.com about the arson convictions of two Oregon ranchers.

It's not saying who did it, or what disciplinary action is being taken. While that's understandable as a personnel issue, what isn't understandable is the BLM's seeming lack of regret and indignation.

Greg Allum, an Eastern Oregon resident once employed by BLM, recently informed Capital Press that his name was used to post comments on an article about Dwight and Steven Hammond, a father and son who were recently sentenced to five years in prison for setting fires on BLM property near Diamond, Ore.

The comments referred to the Hammonds as "clowns" and defended the actions of BLM in pursuing criminal charges against them.

Allum told us that although he didn't support the Hammonds' actions, he thought the five-year sentences were excessive and the government's prosecution over zealous. The comments didn't reflect his attitudes, which he said were well-known among his

colleagues at BLM.

After checking the Internet Protocol address used to make the comments, Capital Press found the comments were posted from a computer that belongs to the BLM.

Michael Campbell, a public information officer for BLM, said the employee's actions violated the BLM's "robust social media policy," under which only authorized officials can represent the agency on social media sites.

Not quite. The employee didn't represent himself (or herself) as the BLM on our site.

The employee instead assumed Allum's identity and surreptitiously vented against the Hammonds and readers who made comments supporting them. All on government time, using government equipment.

It would seem the purpose of the posts was as much to embarrass Allum as vilify supporters.

Whether BLM appreciates it or not, the employee diminished the agency in the eyes of local farmers and ranchers and bolstered a popular perception that government workers have too much time on their hands.

Allum deserves an apology, and the responsible employee needs to be shown the door.



Rik Dalvit/For the Capital Press

## OUR VIEW

# Full disclosure best policy

When it comes to purchasing real estate, caveat emptor — the Latin phrase for "let the buyer beware" — isn't enough. The more information a buyer gets, the better.

That includes informing buyers of what it's like to live in the country.

The worst-case scenario is for a new home buyer to wake up one morning and, courtesy of a shift in the wind, be treated to the odor of a nearby feedlot, onion processor, dairy lagoon, hog farm or any number of other common rural fragrances.

That's where the problems start. When a new rural resident complains about them, it does little good to say, "It's the smell of money." To many newcomers to rural living, it's just the smell of you-know-what.

What anyone buying property in rural areas — or anywhere else, for that matter — needs is a heads-up on what to expect. Life in farm country is different from life on the cul-de-sac or in the city. Besides the transitory

smells, growers sometimes work long days running combines or tractors and spraying pesticides, grain dryers operate 24 hours a day at harvest time and some vineyards and berry growers even use compressed-air cannons or screeching raptor calls to scare away birds that would destroy their crops.

To find out about these and other unique qualities of country living after the sale closes does no one any good. It can open the door to disagreements, unpleasantness and even litigation.

Most states have strong right to farm laws spelling out that standard farm practices cannot be targeted for nuisance lawsuits or complaints from neighbors. This is good, but getting that message across to a stary-eyed home buyer who has his, or her, heart set on owning a slice of heaven in the country is often difficult. That is, until the reality of a farmer spraying manure on the adjacent field sets in.

To avoid misunderstandings and disappointments, some counties have adopted right-to-farm disclosure forms

that property buyers must sign.

In Skagit County, Wash., the Right-to-Manage Natural Resource Lands Disclosure tells buyers near natural resource operations they "should be prepared to accept such incompatibilities, inconveniences or discomfort from normal, necessary natural resource land operations when performed in compliance with best management practices and local, state and federal law."

In Idaho, where the idea is in nascent form, industry and legislative leaders are considering a similar disclosure. If they haven't already, other states and counties would do well to consider following suit.

There are many great reasons to live in the country. That is a statement of the obvious. But there can also be downsides. A disclosure of those downsides will allow buyers to make an informed decision about living in the country.

Full disclosure is the only way to avoid misunderstandings, or worse.

## Readers' views

### Treaties threaten well-being of U.S.

Please help me understand why people don't learn from history, or the writing on the wall.

The promotion of the Trans-Pacific Partnership and Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership treaties appears to be courting favor. Wasn't the North American Free Trade Agreement given a similar pitch? But what we reaped was a trade deficit, loss of jobs and a poor economy.

"This will not happen with the Central America Free Trade Agreement" was the rhetoric. The result was more job losses, a huge increase in the trade deficit, imported foods with prices our farmers couldn't compete with, farms lost, pov-

erty and a decreasing economy.

Now we have the same rhetoric for these two treaties, but there are dangerous consequences we are not aware of. Most members of Congress cannot read the full contents, yet our president is pushing for passage of these treaties.

The treaties were revealed by some sources to be an avenue to merge us with the European Union under United Nations control. It calls for relinquishing our guns, farmers would work under foreign regulations and more jobs would be lost to nations with lower-paid workers.

An article in a United Nations publication refers to the avenue for us — one avenue being Agenda 21. It reads, "Agenda 21 proposes any array of actions which are

intended to be implemented by every person on earth. It calls for specific changes of action for all peoples. Effective execution of Agenda 21 will require a profound reorientation of all humans unlike anything the world has ever experienced."

Yes, by treaties and agendas they are incrementally gaining ground to enslave us because by trusting our government and legislators we do nothing, and lose our na-

tion and freedom.

We see no movement from Congress, which has the power to stop this. Why aren't we complaining by having marches like Martin Luther King to stop this assault on our sovereignty and freedoms?

We need to hold the president and Congress accountable. United we stand, divided we fall.

Mary Ann Novak  
Yamhill, Ore.

### Letters policy

**Write to us:** Capital Press welcomes letters to the editor on issues of interest to farmers, ranchers and the agribusiness community.

**Letters policy:** Please limit letters to 300 words and include your home address and a daytime telephone number with your submission. Longer pieces, 500-750 words, may be considered as guest commentary pieces for use on the opinion pages.

**Send letters via email to opinions@capitalpress.com. Emailed letters are preferred and require less time to process, which could result in quicker publication. Letters also may be sent to P.O. Box 2048, Salem, OR 97308; or by fax to 503-370-4383.**

### Left-wing judges need to be impeached

The two legal cases in your newspaper (about the sentencing of ranchers Steven and Dwight Hammond for arson and the Washington Supreme Court allowing closed advisory board meetings) show to what extent of ignorance lawyer federal judges and lawyer state judges have sunk.

Lawyer federal judges are all appointed political hacks from whichever party is in office. They do, and want, to run the country. They make law as left-wing Democrats.

The Hammond case is a good example of judges costing American citizens millions of dollars for crimes that hurt no one. What fools.

Take that money out of their million-dollar pensions and that would be the end of it.

Left-wing judges worship trees, fish, bugs, rivers, insects, dirt, etc. They assign more value to them than humans. As soon as the American citizens get their "guts" back, we will impeach any judge who takes over schools, governments, snail darter fish, etc. To jail they will go.

Most people don't know that judges can retire as multi-millionaires at age 52. They are major hogs at the public trough.

Jurors should keep in mind the penalties involved. The Supreme Court should have been impeached.

Like I said, no guts, not glory.

William J. Purcell  
Lebanon, Ore.