

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**  
John Perry

**Editor**  
Joe Beach

**Managing Editor**  
Carl Sampson

opinions@capitalpress.com

Online: www.capitalpress.com/opinion

## OUR VIEW

# Inslee tries again on carbon tax

As Washington's legislative leaders look for more money for the state's schools, Gov. Jay Inslee has an idea.

He wants to tax carbon as a way to stop climate change and use some of the added revenue to pay for irrigation projects as a way to convince rural legislators to support the tax.

The problem: Inslee's carbon tax does neither. He has offered no indication of whether, or how much, climate change would be impacted by his tax, which targets gasoline and other fuels. And the inclusion of money for irrigation projects has failed to convince rural Republicans to back the tax. It should also be noted that schools would still be



Don Jenkins/Capital Press  
Washington Gov. Jay Inslee would use some of the revenue from his new carbon tax to pay for irrigation projects as a way to entice rural legislators to support it.

underfunded.

The state Supreme Court has ordered the legislature to give

more money to public schools — billions of dollars more. The court said that, under the state constitution, the legislature is required to adequately fund education for kindergarten through high school. The legislature, which is in charge of the state's pocketbook, hasn't yet figured out a way to do that.

Inslee, however, continues to beat the drum for a carbon tax despite the fact that the voters and the legislature have already rejected the idea, most recently in the November election, when Initiative 732 failed by an overwhelming 59 to 41 percent margin.

In its current form, the \$25 per ton carbon tax on fuel would bring in \$2 billion over the next

two years. Buyers and sellers of fuel, including farmers and ranchers, would pay the tax, increasing their costs.

Organizations such as the Washington State Farm Bureau argue the tax would also force processors and suppliers to leave the state, and, ironically, create more carbon emissions because more of their products would have to be shipped farther to Washington customers.

Under Inslee's tax plan, only half of the revenue would go toward schools, and the rest would be held out as carrots in the form of money for water projects, encouraging the use of electric cars, forest health and "clean" energy.

If Inslee wants to spend half

the tax revenue to convince rural Republicans to pass his plan, he appears to have come up short.

Senate Majority Leader Mark Schoesler, R-Ritzville, pointed out that Initiative 732 offered many tax breaks and other incentives to voters, but it was still soundly defeated.

"A sugar-coated version didn't do very well," he said of the carbon tax initiative, adding that he doubts Inslee's latest version would gain any traction either.

Sen. Jim Honeyford, a Republican from the Yakima Valley, was more blunt in his assessment of the outlook for the carbon tax.

"I think the chances are slim and none, and slim just got on the bus to get out of town," he said.

## OUR VIEW



# Research helps better understand grazing near streams

Environmental groups say cattle grazing on public rangeland trample and erode streambanks and pollute water.

But a five-year study of cattle grazing conducted by Oregon State University shows cattle spend only 1 to 2.5 percent of their time in streams or buffer areas. And rather than ranging up and down the length of streams in allotments, cattle used only 10 to 25 percent of the available stream area.

The cows typically did not rest or graze near streams. Instead, they spent most of their time grazing on higher ground or resting in dry areas

away from streams.

John Williams, an OSU Extension rangeland expert in Wallowa County, said cows enter riparian areas for two reasons: "One is to drink, the other is to cross."

The study was done on a tight budget. Researchers built their own GPS collars, which generated location data every five minutes. They attached the collars to 10 cows in three different herds.

Over the course of five years they collected 3.75 million data points.

The data show that animals behave differently at different points in the grazing season. And

that, Williams says, suggests that producers could use such data to increase the efficiency of their operations.

The findings are potentially significant.

Now we know that cattle probably don't cause as much damage to streams and riparian areas as popularly thought, and it's possible to use real data to reduce damage further by better management.

The study shows the value of testing assumptions, and using what's learned to make things better.

We encourage OSU to continue this line of inquiry, and for all parties to take note.

A cow and calf drink from Catherine Creek in northeast Oregon. Using GPS tracking collars over five grazing seasons on federal land, researchers determined cows spend 1 to 2.5 percent of their time in streams.

Courtesy of Oregon State University

## OUR VIEW

# Sustainability and agriculture

Speaking to reporters earlier this week, American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall said producers need to speak up and tell the public how they are producing more food with less water, less pesticides and less plowing.

"We need to take back the concept of sustainability, because nobody works harder on sustainability than the American farmer and rancher," he said.

He says agriculture has never been more sustainable. Here, in his own words:



Zippy Duvall

"Just think about it for a minute; by using modern technologies, today's farmers grow more crops on the same amount of land, using less plowing and pesticides, and feeding more people.

"By developing more uses for our crops, like energy, we are making our economy more sustainable.

"If farmers don't take care of our land, we cannot stay in business.

"By providing food for all

Americans, we are sustaining their freedom — so they can pursue the careers they are interested in.

"We have a great story to tell. We need to take back the concept of sustainability — because nobody is working harder to be sustainable than America's farmers and ranchers."

All good stuff. But he saves the money shot for last.

"For agriculture to be sustainable, farming and ranching have to be profitable."

No profit, no food. Enough said.

# Time for a change in Washington, D.C.

By LOREN STOUT  
For the Capital Press

Guest  
comment  
Loren Stout



The presidential election of 2008 was supposed to be one of hope and change.

After looking back on it, an early warning sign occurred before the election that would lead one to question why the election was labeled as such. That event occurred when then-candidate Barack Obama was caught on an open mike stating his prejudice against the rural people and their way of life.

No one dreamed at the time this would literally put a bull's-eye on the back of rural people, their jobs and even their faith. It opened the flood gates to extreme prejudice and in the end a systematic effort to break the economy of these communities for the gain of a few.

It became legitimate to demonize people for what they did for a living, especially if it led to huge profits for their donors and lobbyists. They did not even bother to break down their prejudice to gender or race. They just included everyone.

The next shot at the rural lifestyle came through the regulatory avenues. They made it so the only people that benefited were the paying "clients" of the elected federal and state officials. Our ex-governor and first lady come to mind.

Another good example of this was a timber consultant that was hired by U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore. They put him on Oregon Public Broadcasting to tell listeners how the people of Malheur County should not have any say in the national monument designation facing them.

This has led to a culture within the government agencies of total complacency. If the people on the ground have a good idea, they are shut up by the threat of losing their job. They learned fast it is the paying clients that run the show.

When U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley and Wyden recruited one of their clients for secretary of the Interior, the picture became very clear what their objective was. This woman fit their qualifications very well. Her job before they paraded her around in front of Congress was to make sure the environmental community could have resources to put rural people and communities out of business.

If it sounds familiar, it is exactly what they are doing now with the Malheur monument.

In the meantime, the senators were contacted by their clients and decided to kick in another monument designation in rural Southern Oregon. These people are already very much aware of how the government is going to put the screws to them. It is a heck of a money-making scheme.

Recently, it was reported that Merkley was brokering a deal in rural Southern Oregon for the removal of dams.

These dams were not government-owned and supplied electricity to a huge area of Southern Oregon and Northern California. The problem is, the dams are owned by one of the richest men in the world. He is also a mega-donor to the Democrats. If the reported terms of this deal are correct, these rural people may have a problem. The owner of the dams is off the hook for the environmental cleanup, plus the company gets tax credits.

Not only do the rate payers and tax payers get shafted, they are using the government to help with making their clients extremely wealthy. This same client is also buying up coal companies for pennies on the dollar. Just something to ponder when you are trying to figure out how to pay \$250,000 a share for this company's stock. Leaves the working class person holding the bag, while the extremely rich enjoy a windfall. Seems to be the new Democratic mantra.

Today's news brought an expected article. Merkley was put in a position of power within the Democratic party. He was finally noticed for his outstanding work for putting rural people and communities out of business while making Democratic clients happy. When U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer came out publicly and spewed his disdain for rural people, and Harry Reid called the rural people terrorists, you had to know something was up.

Then to top it off, Hillary Clinton said she was going to put all the coal miners out of business with the help of the secretary of the Interior and her agenda. The only thing they forgot to include was they have been trying to eliminate ranchers, farmers, loggers and the rest of the miners.

After the election the Democratic party has been meeting to try and figure out how to get their message across to the rural people and their communities that mostly have blue-collar workers. U.S. Rep. Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., claims it is a communication breakdown. I do not believe that at all. Even the state-educated working class person knows what the middle finger means. I would have never thought the once great Democratic party would literally sell the blue-collar American worker.

I do not know what price each person brought, but it must have been pretty lucrative because we are damn sure being sold.

Loren Stout's family has ranched in Grant County, Ore., since 1878. He lives in John Day.