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# Opinion

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## OUR VIEW

# Washington doesn't need more publicly owned land

With all the heated talk over the last year about how much of the West is tied up in public lands, the last thing we thought we'd hear is an elected official talk about the need to tie up more.

But we weren't thinking of Washington Gov. Jay Inslee.

Jon Snyder, the governor's policy adviser on outdoor recreation and economic development, told legislators last week that the state budget office projects Washington will grow by 1 million people in the next decade. What will those new residents want? More public lands on which to hunt, fish,

hike, bike, camp and otherwise recreate.

"If we do grow, the possibility for needing more public lands does increase," said Snyder, who said he was also speaking on behalf of the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Fish and Wildlife, Parks and Recreation, and the Recreation and Conservation Office.

The administration worries that a roughly 14 percent increase in the state's population — from 7.06 million to 8.06 million — would crowd existing public lands and degrade the experience.

By any objective measure, there is no shortage of public land

in Washington.

DNR, WDFW and Parks and Recreation own 6.4 million acres, or about 14 percent of the state, according to a 2014 state land inventory. The federal government owns 12.7 million acres in Washington, or 28 percent of the state.

There are 139 state parks, ranging in size from the half-acre Rothschild House State Park in Jefferson County to the 13,919 acres of Mount Spokane State Park.

Washington state is home to three national parks — Olympic, North Cascades and Mount Rainier. Those areas of the Cascades not a part of a national park are

national forest land from the Columbia River to the Canadian border. There are nine national forests, 23 national wildlife refuges and three national monuments.

Viewed on a per capita basis, there is .9 acres of state land per Washingtonian now. It will drop to .79 acres if the population increases by a million. Add in federal land and it's 2.7 acres per person now, 2.36 acres if the population increases.

Just how much more land is required has not been stated. To maintain the current per capita figure, Washington would have to buy another 845,000 acres.

We doubt anyone is seriously considering that kind of land grab. Probably.

But that's not the point. Each acre the state takes comes off the tax rolls and out of other useful production. The state owns more, individuals own less.

Rural Washington generally, and Washington agriculture specifically, pay the price when the local economy turns from producing and processing agricultural products to the service-sector jobs fostered by tourism. Rural Washington can be much more than a just a playground for Seattle metroplex. Enough is enough.

## OUR VIEW

# Idaho legislators should leave dyed fuel alone

Some Idaho legislators have convinced themselves that the state needs to clamp down on the scoundrels who use untaxed dyed diesel fuel in their cars and trucks.

They looked at a report that estimated dyed fuel cheaters were costing the state \$3 million to \$15 million and decided that the state is missing out.

To counter such egregious activities, some legislators propose Senate Bill 1072, which would deputize various state employees to enforce the dyed diesel law. Under current law, only off-road vehicles such as tractors, combines and logging and mining equipment can use the dyed diesel and thus save the operators 32 cents a gallon in state fuel taxes and 24.4 cents in federal taxes.

We have a hard time accepting the premise that cheating the system is as widespread as proponents of the new system believe. We also have a hard time believing that the state would recoup in fines the cost of such a system.

But as bad as it is, that system is better than another proposal, Senate Bill 1052. Under it, there would be no dyed diesel in Idaho. Farmers, miners and loggers would have to keep receipts and other proof that diesel fuel was used in off-road equipment and submit them each month or annually to receive a tax refund.

Such a paper mill would be one more example of how government, even with the best of intentions, can turn a bad idea into a terrible one.

Worse yet, just a few minutes of pondering uncovers loopholes in the proposal big enough to drive a combine through. Anyone who owns off-road equipment could presumably file for tax refunds on any fuel he or she bought. It would be up to the state to ferret out if someone was overstating off-road fuel use. Thankfully, SB 1052 died quietly in the Capitol this week.

We think the current system is fine. While not perfect, it's efficient and the vast majority of farmers, miners and loggers play by the rules.

To empower state employees to check on them or to install an unenforceable system in its place doesn't make sense in terms of cost, effort or outcome.



# Why President Trump needed to reject TPP

By CLINT DIDIER  
For the Capital Press

Guest  
comment  
Clint Didier



As a second-generation farmer here in "Hell to Pay" (Eltopia) Washington, I am thankful our new commander-in-chief, President Donald Trump, saw the erroneous Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement for what it was and took America's participation off the table.

As I was raised to be a Constitution-loving patriot of America, I was appalled to see this 5,500-plus page collaboration supported by so many of our elected officials and fellow citizens, including some of my fellow farmers and farm organizations.

My family farms alfalfa and Timothy hay. We rely on foreign trade to keep our bottom line in the black. Article 30 and 31 of the TPP agreement would have imposed quotas on U.S. agricultural goods being exported to foreign countries. As an agricultural producer, you would be dealing with a foreign government entity that would issue certificates of purchase rather than you personally dealing with your buyer.

## Loss of power

TPP was slated to be an agreement between 12 countries, each having one vote and each having an equal power in any dispute. In Article 27, members of Congress, both House and Senate, who supported and endorsed this agreement neutered themselves of power involving foreign trade. They would have granted the Trans-Pacific Partner Commission more power than is wielded by our own Congress.

Why would Congress even consider giving up our sovereignty as a nation through any agreement or treaty? This document, secretly contrived and written to exist as a living, evolving document that could be altered on a whim, certainly was not in our nation's best interest.

## Climate change

Article 20.4 was a vehicle to pass Obama's Climate Change Treaty. What the hell is climate change doing in a trade agreement? Since farmers and ranchers are heavy "fossil fuel" consumers, I find this to be another attack on our bottom line with a burdensome carbon tax threat.

With current agricultural commodity prices at a troubling low, (partially due to the West Coast port slowdown that our then fearless leader failed to act upon) I think you can see my concern. Article 18 of TPP reduced one's property of thought or "patent" by reducing the length-of-time protection. Farmers and ranchers are always using the matter between their ears to figure out a better, more efficient, or more economic way of getting their work done. Innovation, creativity, and a "get 'er done" attitude has led the way of ideas, or "patents" to be filed for the protection of American inventions.

Why would we allow in-

novation to be punished? U.S. innovation is far superior to the world-stage of ideas because of our freedom.

Agriculture across the U.S. is dependent on being able to secure workers in a timely manner to plant, manage and harvest our agricultural products. Article 10 and Article 12 would allow companies the ability to legally bring in foreign workers. This not only robs agricultural jobs but affects jobs in all of America.

Let's face facts. Not everyone wants to sit behind a desk or pick up an unemployment check. Many Americans want a purpose in life and embrace the three pillars of American exceptionalism: rugged individualism, self-reliance and personal responsibility. So why do we allow our hard-earned tax dollars to be used as a means to bring in foreigners who do not always want to assimilate to American values and principles? We have a vast number of teens who could sure use an opportunity to learn the work ethic and grasp the value of earning a buck and spending a buck!

## Red flag

The TPP agreement contained only 5 chapters dealing with trade out of 29. That fact alone should have raised a red flag. Certainly 5,500-plus pages would be hard for any congressman or woman to digest and comprehend.

But instead our Congress gave President Obama "Fast Track Authority." From being an immigration Trojan horse, eventually merging America with China and Russia, giving unelected international tribunals more power than our own Congress, it is hoped you can see why President Trump canceled America's participation in this disastrous agreement.

One segment on food labeling has already passed Congress: a repeal of COOL — Country of Origin Labeling — on all meats. Imported beef, pork and poultry from foreign countries had been labeled as such, which gave the American consumer a choice.

No longer! So American consumers are playing Russian roulette with their meat purchases. Our Congress has put every American at risk. Beef has been arriving at American ports from Brazil, where the United Nations last fall reported another outbreak of hoof and mouth disease. One of the greatest assets of America is our abundant and safe food supply. Trade agreements such as the TPP jeopardize that valuable asset by jeopardizing the financial viability of the American farmer and rancher. If America's agricultural community stays alive and well so will this great nation!

Clint Didier is a farmer and rancher, former congressional candidate and two-time Super Bowl champion from Eltopia, Wash.

## Readers' views

### Science, politics and agriculture

Last week's story, "Shrink the EPA?" was interesting and alarming at the same time. Mr. Lehr made some interesting claims and strategies on reducing the size and scope of the EPA, and includes turning over the agency's responsibilities to the individual states.

It would be unfair for me to comment on the wisdom of reducing regulations on pesticides and fertilizers. I'll let the experts have that debate.

As a farmer I agree that too many urban residents do not have a realistic appreciation of what it takes to produce our crops and keep their

bellies full. I try to keep an open mind, but that said, his statement that "man does not control the temperature of our planet" betrays an ideology that precludes a basic respect for science. Sad!

David Nemarnik  
Sherwood, Ore.

### HB 2469 good for Oregon ag

Local jurisdictions should be permitted to determine what is in their local interest. There is no great harm in recognizing differences between the Rogue Valley and the Willamette Valley or Eastern Oregon. Rogue Valley farmers

have different markets and priorities. In California, 6 or 7 Counties have restrictions on GMO planting, while the others do not. This mix has allowed California agriculture to serve a variety of markets.

Jackson and Josephine counties together make a logical boundary for a GMO restriction zone. In this area, the tractor brigades came out in support of restrictions on GMO plantings and the voters passed the county measures by wide margins on May 20, 2014. Seed buyers for organics will not take seed with even small amounts of engineered content. They don't need to.

Russia and Europe will provide seed that is GMO free if we cannot.

With findings from the World Health Organization and in California that glyphosate is a probable carcinogen, and the labeling and restrictions that are sure to follow, the premium for non-GMO crops will only grow. More counties may wish to take advantage, and let farmers earn that premium. Other counties will not. It should be their choice. Local control lets us do what is best for local residents and local agriculture.

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