

# Local / Opinion

— LETTERS TO THE EDITOR —

## Editorial was incorrect

To the Editor:  
I would like to address the concerns submitted by “GDP” in the recent *The Record Courier* editorial “Public Lands Resolution 15-01 Presented to Commissioners” dated May, 28, 2015.  
The editorial addressed the May 20, 2015 County Commissioners Session and titled it, “Is there an Agenda with the Agenda?”

My reply is: there is **no hidden agenda!**

All County Commission Sessions have time set aside for “Citizen Participation” and this is where anyone can come before the Commissioners with anything they would like to address or present. This is not anything new to the Agenda and I encourage anyone to use this opportunity!

This was the case with the Republican Resolution 15-01 that Chuck Chase presented to us during the Citizen Participation. I was not aware that this was why Mr. Chase was in attendance. *The Record Courier* suggests that “there were rumblings the Republican Resolution was going to be presented at the Commissioner meeting.”

I am not sure where *The Record Courier's* source is for “rumblings” but they may want to check it out a little more closely next time.

With regard to Montana State Representative Kerry White being present, I was able to visit with him at the Forest Access for All Banquet, and he hoped to attend our meeting and listen to what we have going on in Baker County. He was not sure of what all he and his wife had going on with friends while they were here, but I said he was welcome if it worked out.

*The Record Courier* was again incorrect in stating, “It is my understanding that all three of the Commissioners were in attendance of the May 16, Forest Access for All Banquet.” Commissioner Kerns was not in attendance, so again *The Record Courier* was mistaken in their editorial and their understanding of what is true.

Next time I would encourage GDP to simply ask me about these issues prior to printing an incorrect editorial.

**Bill Harvey**  
Haines

## Resolution isn't as presented in recent editorial

To the Editor:

The recent editorial from *The Record Courier* titled “Public Lands resolution 15-01 Presented to Commissioners” makes one wonder if the level of reporting by their staff has degenerated into bias and slanted editorials by their paper.

As a duly elected Republican Precinct Committee Person, I was asked to head or Chair the Republican Party Natural Resource Committee. I was tasked to help come up with a resolution to give state and county control over our public lands. It was put out for comment, additions or subtractions before the final vote. Most of the Western States have already taken this step to take control over there public lands. Several of them including Utah are suing to take back control of their public lands. Some states, including Hawaii, have already demanded their public lands and have gotten them back, as with all the states East of Colorado.

As I read the slanted editorial on my presenting the Commissioners with the Resolution from the Baker County Republican Party, I became a little concerned. The Resolution had been voted on by the Republican Party and passed by a vote of the majority of those present to be presented to the Commissioners in the Public Session of the Commission meeting. If the PCP members not at the meeting had wanted a say in the passing of the Resolution they should have attended our meetings. It was not as *The Record-Courier* alluded to in their editorial.

I am not sure *The Record-Courier* reporters understand the difference between the public input portion of the Commissioners meeting and the regular meeting. Any member of the public can bring any of their concerns to the Commissioners during the public input portion of the meeting. The regular Commissioners meeting is where they do have a predetermined agenda to follow, which by the way, is posted in the newspapers ahead of time.

With increased Federal control, closing roads, no timber to sell, disease killing our forests, wild fires, EPA now claiming jurisdiction over all waters in Baker County and the rest of the states, it kind of makes one wonder just where *The Record-Courier* stands. Is it with the County or the out-of-control governmental agencies?

**Chuck Chase**  
Baker City

*Editor's Note: Both letters/opinions above were submitted to all local news media.*

— GUEST OPINION —

## New EPA rule muddies the waters in Eastern Ore.

By Rep. Greg Walden

Farmers, ranchers, and other property owners in eastern Oregon have been wondering: what will Washington, D.C. try to unnecessarily regulate next? Where will a federal agency again attempt to curtail private property rights? How will this uncertainty affect already struggling rural economies?

This week we got that answer when the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized their rule to massively and unilaterally expand federal jurisdiction over water and private property. With the stroke of a pen, the administration has pushed aside the “navigable waters” limitations of the Clean Water Act, leaving in its wake vague definitions that potentially open up intermittent streams, vernal pools, irrigation ditches, or ponds to even more federal regulations.

The EPA first proposed this rule under the guise of “clarifying” the scope of the Clean Water Act. But I’ve heard throughout Oregon that the vague language in their proposal actually creates more uncertainty, not less. More red tape, not less. For farmers, ranchers, Oregonians, and others that utilize our water resources, it is a huge threat.

Ranchers are wondering when the EPA will come after their stock ponds. Wheat growers worry about an intermittent stream adjacent to a field. Fruit and vegetable growers are concerned about their irrigation ditches. As North Powder rancher Curtis Martin told me last year, the rule is “an overreach by the federal government that threatens to eliminate conservation practices currently implemented by farmers and ranchers across Oregon.”

I have long opposed expansion of this authority, whether through legislation or administrative rulemaking.

This regulatory overreach by the EPA blatantly ignores Congress’ repeated rejection of similar legislative efforts to expand jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act in the past. Of course, we shouldn’t be that surprised. The EPA has tried this before, and they have twice been rebuked by the Supreme Court.

Even the Small Business Administration has said that the proposed rule would have “direct, significant effects” on small businesses, and recommended that the EPA withdraw



Submitted Photo

Greg Walden represents Oregon's Second Congressional District, which covers 20 counties in southern, central, and eastern Oregon, including Baker County.

their rule. But the agency went full steam ahead this week.

The economies of rural Oregon and other communities around the country face enough obstacles already. Broken federal land policies and unnecessary red tape have strangled communities, often leaving only agriculture to grow jobs and combat unemployment rates in the double digits. We don’t need agencies in Washington D.C. erecting more hurdles and creating more uncertainty as our farmers and ranchers work to feed the world and create jobs in rural communities.

That’s why I worked hard to pass a bill in the House to require the EPA to withdraw the rule. The Regulatory Integrity Protection Act (H.R. 1732) passed the House on a bipartisan vote in May. 24 House Democrats (including my Oregon colleague Kurt Schrader) joined every Republican in supporting this common-sense measure.

As one Oregon farmer told me when a similar bill passed the House last year, “This attempt to control private lands using the Clean Water Act must be stopped. It is important that farms be able to focus on raising fresh, healthy, and necessary food and feed for this world without unnecessary regulations. Congress has taken an important step to help ensure farmers can continue to farm their land without federal permission and allows landowners to meaningfully improve water quality through existing state programs.”

The House has also passed legislation that would prohibit funding from being used on this rule (this is on top of our successful efforts to cut the EPA’s budget by 21%--\$2.2 billion—over the past five years).

The Senate should take up and pass these bills right away and send the EPA back to the drawing board. Baker County farmers, ranchers and rural communities deserve better than federal agencies strangling them with more red tape. It’s time to ditch this rule.

## Couple purchases winning lottery ticket in Baker City

Salem, Ore. - Driving back to Boise from an Oregon vacation, Cole Jensen asked his girlfriend if she could hold on for another 30 miles so they could make it to Baker City to stop for food and fuel. The couple had spent the weekend in Pendleton and were headed home.

They pulled into the Jackson's in Baker City and as he paid for gas, Jensen went into the convenience store and gas station to get an energy drink for the rest of the trip home. While in line, he realized he had an extra \$10 in his pocket and on a whim purchased a Wild 10s Scratch-it ticket. It turned out to be a \$100,000 winning ticket. "It was the first time I ever played the Oregon Lottery," Jensen said. "We sat in the car looking at the ticket and we couldn't believe it. I'm glad my girlfriend waited those extra 30 miles!"

The couple drove the rest of the way home, and waited until after the



Photo Courtesy of the Oregon Lottery.

The lucky lottery winners.

Memorial Day weekend, and then drove to Salem to claim Jensen's prize. "It was hard sitting on that ticket for three days," Jensen said. "But it gave me time to come up with a plan on what to do with the money."

Jensen said he was going to use the winnings to go on a very nice vacation with his girlfriend and he also was going to buy all of his buddies video game systems, so they could play online together. After that, he plans on saving the bulk of the winnings.

Lottery officials recommend that you always sign

the back of your tickets with each Oregon Lottery game you play, to ensure you can claim any prize you may win.

The Oregon Lottery reminds players to always sign the back of their Lottery tickets, regardless of the game. In the event of winning a jackpot, they should consult with a trusted financial planner or similar professional to develop a plan for their winnings.

Prize winners of more than \$50,000 should contact the Lottery office to schedule an appointment to claim their prize.

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Published weekly every Friday.  
Subscription rates per year are \$29.95 all areas, e-mail delivery. \$39.95 print issue, home delivery, Baker City city limits only. \$49.95 print issue, mail delivery, outside Baker City city limits only.  
Payment in advance.

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