

Opinion / Politics

— EDITORIAL —

The sick encyclical

We watched our social media feeds with interest this week in response to the Pope's encyclical—not all of it, because the mainstream media seemed to focus on about 5% of what he said—specifically the part about the world's supposed climate change crisis.

The response was divided.

On one hand we saw twenty-some-things, the entitled kind whose families pay for their social activities, travels and \$200 cell phones while they've never held down a steady job in their lives.

They think this Pope "is, like, the best one evah!"

On the other hand, we saw Catholics, the kind who work hard and want to raise their families according to the teachings of their church. For the most part, this group is not pleased.

We can understand the frustration.

See, this Pope has a Chief Scientific Advisor. The problem is that this "advisor" has a lifelong, one-sided agenda.

Professor Hans Joachim Schellnhuber from Germany is a militant environmentalist, a physicist by education, and

activist by trade.

He's as far from an objective advisor as one could get.

He believes governments should ban the use of all fossil fuels immediately.

He has stated several times that he believes the German government, and all governments for that matter, should abdicate some of their executive power, relinquishing it instead to a select group of scientists—namely his group. (Mad scientist, anyone?)

He said 20 years ago, and then 10 years ago that he felt climate change would destroy the world 10 years hence, taking up to "6 billion lives" with it.

And somehow, through his international political connections, this loon has wheedled his way into the Vatican.

Schellnhuber is no real mystery.

But we wonder who advised the Pope, who happens to be protected by the armed Swiss Guard, that those who manufacture firearms aren't Christian?

Conservative churches have been under attack by progressives for decades. But somehow we get the feeling that they've moved on to Plan B: Rotting the Catholic Church's key tenets from the inside out—and from the top down. We hope the Pope will step away from the pressure of political correctness and shift back to the kind of wisdom those in his church seek. We see a little of it peeking out from inside the pages of the encyclical the media ignored.

—The Baker County Press Editorial Board

— GUEST OPINION —

Federal water grab must be checked

By Sen. Mike Crapo

In the face of unprecedented opposition from small businesses, agriculture groups, lawmakers on both sides of the aisle and many other Americans, the Administration is moving forward in finalizing the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) efforts to wrongly assert jurisdiction over nearly all waters of the United States.

The Administration's water grab is harmful to our economy, inconsistent with the intent of the Clean Water Act (CWA), subverts state water sovereignty and jeopardizes private property rights. Congress must act immediately on S. 1140, the Federal Water Quality Protection Act, bipartisan legislation that would rein in EPA's misguided attempt to exceed the bounds of its statutory power.

Through the "Waters of the United States" Rule finalized on May 27, 2015 by the EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), the Administration is greatly increasing the regulatory power of the federal government under the CWA altering the scope of this law by asserting jurisdiction over all waters of the United States. The EPA's action significantly expands federal authority, allowing the agency to regulate nearly every stream, ditch, pond, puddle and other local water bodies.

I joined 37 other Senators, including fellow Idaho Senator Jim Risch, in co-sponsoring S. 1140 that would prevent implementation of the final "Waters of the United States" rule and direct the EPA and Corps to redo the final rule following commonsense principles. The legislation stipulates that any new rule must adhere to the principles that waters of the U.S. are limited to truly navigable waters, including streams identified as drinking water sources, wetlands protecting water sources and not the isolated ponds; stormwater, floodwater and wastewater management systems; agricultural irrigation systems and virtually all other non-navigable water bodies that the agencies are seeking to control.

The EPA's jurisdictional grab of our waterways violates its statutory authority and congressional intent. Under our constitutional system, the states, not the federal government, have always had primary jurisdiction over the allocation, management and use of water. The federal government's jurisdiction has been limited



Submitted Photo

Michael Dean "Mike" Crapo is the senior United States Senator from the state of Idaho, in office since 1999. A Republican, he previously served as the United States Representative for Idaho's 2nd congressional district from 1993 to 1999.

under the CWA to navigable waters. Past legislation to exert federal control over non-navigable waters has not been enacted into law. I have helped block it in the U.S. Senate. Lacking congressionally-authorized authority, the Administration is side-stepping Congress and the American people and acting unilaterally to take over our water.

This legislation would make the limitations on the federal government's authority over our water even more clear.

Protection of our drinking water sources must be maintained. However, the Administration taking control of waters that were not meant to be under the federal government's control is not the answer. Further, the Administration must consult with the states to ensure that any new guidelines do not carry unnecessary burdens that do not result in appreciable benefits for protecting our waterways.

This legislation is meant to help make sure that occurs and America's small businesses, farmers and ranchers do not get further trampled under the weight of heavy-handed federal mandates.

In May, the U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation requiring the Administration to withdraw the rule and setting guidelines for any future rule. As a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, I supported the committee's recent passage of S. 1140 out of the committee.

Now, the Senate must act to ensure that this Administration is not unchecked in its trampling of state water sovereignty and infringement on property rights. Enactment of S. 1140 would be a step in the right direction to controlling this unwarranted expansion of federal control.

— LETTERS TO THE EDITOR —

USFS thinks informed people are dangerous

To the Editor:

The U.S. Forest Service has sunk to a new low in Eastern Oregon, that is, they have decided that you are too dangerous a group of people to be informed as to what roads they plan to close in your mountains. How do I know that? Because I have received a response telling me so.

While they put out propaganda of how they want to engage with you on the national forest, but when I or anyone else requests documents to engage, we are told we may cause "injury to the quality of the agency decision." Let me emphasize, we, the people of Eastern Oregon may cause injury because we received a document to educate ourselves with.

Much like the mullahs in the mosques of Afghanistan, the Forest Service means to keep you ignorant as to what is going on around you. Communities and citizens are easier to control if they are kept from

the truth of what's going on around them and the decisions a few are making for the larger population. See, you/we/I are too dumb, too backward, too unenlightened to understand the complexities of such ecological process, or are we?

I have a college education in natural resources. I know that water flows downhill and that active management techniques play a greater role in meeting the public's needs than exclusion of use. I know that there is a "tread lightly" campaign being pushed by a small minority on the upper echelons of the Forest Service where man is looked at as a disease on the landscape and not a part of it. But most importantly I know this. You and I are not dumb, backward or unenlightened.

It's a lie, and we are dealing with liars in the leadership positions of the Forest Service, from the supervisor's office up. If you want to keep your mountains open you are going to have to dig in.

John George
Bates

Self-service gas bill becomes law

SALEM—House Bill 3011, brought by Representative Cliff Bentz (R-Ontario), has passed the House, Senate, and was signed into law by Governor Kate Brown yesterday.

The bill allows Oregonians to "self-serve" gasoline at rural gas stations between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.

Rep. Bentz said: "This is a good day for those who find themselves low on gas in remote parts of Oregon late at night. No longer will they have to wait until the next day for a station to open.

Instead, they will be able to serve themselves at those gas stations which choose to install selfserve pumps."

The bill addresses the all too common occurrence in Eastern Oregon, where hundreds of miles can separate gas stations, many of which do not stay open 24-hours per day. Travelers driving across the vast spaces of Eastern Oregon who are unfamiliar with long distances between stations and the fact that gas is not available 24/7 in many of Eastern Oregon's small towns, can become stranded, having to wait until a station opens in the morning.

"Gas station owners, and sometimes ranchers and farmers, are awakened by stranded travelers pounding on their doors in the middle of the night to come out and pump gas,"

said Rep. Bentz.

The bill applies to only those counties with a population of less than 40,000 people.

Paul Romain, Executive Director of the Oregon Fuels Association, said: "The Oregon Fuels Association commends Representative Bentz for his leadership in making sure that fuel is available to motorists in the rural parts of our state at all hours. House Bill 3011 goes a long way to ensure that people who need gasoline at night will have adequate access to fueling stations."

House Bill 3011 was signed into law by the Governor on June 23rd.

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