

The little law that could, if it were given the chance

Just one year ago, the voters of Oregon, passed an environmental measure into law: The Oregon Resource Conservation Trust Fund (ORCTF). This bill, like too many really good bills, is waiting for funding. Its a serious indication of misplaced priorities when our legislature will fund prisons but not schools and environmental programs. Perhaps if they are able to provide enough jailspace for the ignorant and unhappy they might find a little time for our ecological needs.

The purpose of the ORCTF is to advance the causes of habitat conservation/restoration and resource recovery. With regard to resource recovery, the Oregon Legislature describes the fundamental benefits of the ORCTF as "... [enabling] the state [to] promote Oregon's natural values, ... provide an economic incentive to effective recycling and reduce contamination of the waters of this state caused by plastic and other debris."

In much simpler terms, this law provides for all the good things left out of Measure 6; enhancement of the resource recovery industry, educational programs, and economic incentives for ecologically sound practices. There's no hidden whip in this law, only positive reinforcement for the

right activities.

While I was damning Measure 6 as a bill that lacked any incentives I was thinking about an existing law's provisions. One of the more interesting tenets in the ORCTF is the provision for funding to be provided for "resource recycling projects." This means that the Trust Fund will pay moneys to aid or establish programs that promote recycling and the reduction of contaminants caused by debris in our state.

What exactly is a "project," according to Salem? Again, the language of the law itself speak best: "... projects that reflect the resource recycling benefits to the state ... [including but not limited to:] (A) Promoting environmental and resource recycling education. (B) Establishing effective recycling systems in the state. (C) Using the educational resources available at Oregon institutions of higher education."

Okay, so we're not hoi-polloi legal dignitaries, how does any of this concern the regular guy? Well, according to ORS 468.681 regarding how a project becomes nominated; "Any person may nominate a resource recycling project for approval..." If you're an Oregonian, still suck air for a living, and want to suggest a viable project to help our environment... YOU CAN DO IT.

Some of the other provisions of the ORCTF provide for; the development of secondary markets for recycled products in Oregon, the stabilization of recycling efforts for depots and processing centers through tax credits, tax credits for groups that conduct clean up activities if the participants are educated about resource recovery.

When I read this last provision I couldn't believe it, but you can; the fund shall allocate moneys to "Fund grants [at a 2:1 ratio vs school contributions] to Oregon educational institutions for research, development, and initiation of resource conservation projects..."

If all this sounds too good to be true then -- in a way -- you're right. Oh don't think that there is some hidden legal boner in the bill, there isn't. The problem is that, although the bill was made law, the LAW has yet to be funded. I expect that if Measure 6 is passed (I am writing this pre-Nov.), IT will find funding (just like the prisons and other select punitive measures). The bill for the fund originally provided for a packaging tax to help fund itself. This tax would only apply to those products that were not at least 40 percent recoverable. The tax itself was only a surcharge of 3/4 of 1 percent of the packages value up to a de-

terminable limit. The plastic industry supported the idea; the paper industry opposed it because the cost of a daily paper would increase a penny (?!!).

Another funding method would involve funds tied to the General Fund. The Trust would have to compete for funds -- not exactly my favorite choice. The paper industry has "indicated" that they would support this plan (thanks guys!).

My choice would be to get 'two birds' with one plan. Oregon is one of 13 "western" states. Of these 13 states, Oregon imports the largest amount of Out-of-State generated hazardous waste, in fact Oregon takes in more than the other states do combined; about 122,000 tons annually. Other states charge between \$90 and \$117 per ton to take in this waste; Oregon, on the other hand charges about ... nothing. This goes a long way toward explaining why we get so much of it. If we implemented a \$100/ton surcharge on this noxious material we would: a) generate about \$13 million annually for the Trust Fund, and b) probably slow down our intake of other people's poisons -- aww gee whiz!

If you think this -- The Oregon Resource Conservation Trust Fund -- is a good law that deserves funding then write your local representative. If you don't know what to say just tear out this article and send it with your name, address and phone number along with a piece of paper with a big "?" on

Environmentalists' Grimoire by Randal Hodgins

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Commander in Chief looks to poll not issues

by Ron Jagodnik, Jr.
Rhapsody Editor

Again, the Commander in Chief George Bush has stepped up the total force in the Persian Gulf driving the anxiety of the American people and the American troops around the country into a crisis state. And all two days after the elections!

Where was the aggressive bend toward Iraq when the Republican incumbents battled to maintain numbers in the House, Senate, and gubernatorial positions throughout the country?

Well, the Commander is Chief was jogging through the country pulling together his political party and making jokes about "reading hips."

How coincidental that two days after the elections, Bush rushed over 100,000 more American troops into the Gulf bringing the total American force equal to the Iraqi forces along the Iraqi-Saudi border. It took Bush nearly three months to make this move - two days after the elections.

Something smells fishy in the Bush.

Three months ago, during election campaigning, Bush announced a show of force into the Gulf as a "defensive" measure to deter Saddam Hussein from invading Saudi Arabia.

Not anymore!
Now that general elections are over, Bush says the American troops are there as an "offensive" force to remove the Iraqis from Kuwait.

Which will it be - defensive or offensive? Only President Bush can tell which, or maybe his campaign manager can tell.

Bush's campaign manager is still interpreting the latest poll.

Unfortunately, this latest push by Bush has alerted Hussein into both positive and negative action viewed from an American stand point.

First, Hussein has agreed to a plan which will allow American hostages to evacuate Kuwait; this is a good thing.

Next, Hussein has asked for military support from such leaders as Kadafi, Castro and Idi Amin to counter the increase in force across the border; this is a bad thing.

Of course, the radical leaders have not committed any troops to the Iraqis yet, but what are the chances that Kadafi wants to

stay out of this one after Reagan whacked him a good one a while back.

It wouldn't be prudent at this juncture for President Bush to be worried about the elections or his own political standing. Instead, he should be concentrating on the consequences of his actions. He should be doing the job for which we put him in office - the Presidency and Commander in Chief. He should be considering the lives he has put on the line. (He should be dreaming

about all of the potential votes in the Persian Gulf! Ha, Ha!). He should be finding out what the American people want.

If he follows through with these steps, he will find himself again elected into office during a time of peace and prosperity for the American people.

Either do it or not, George! Find things out before you get yourself into deep (like now). Don't let your public popularity polls run the conflict in Iraq!

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Humor on Tap

