

# Hacking Away

Oregon's land-use program under constant attack

**S**ince its inception 35 years ago, Oregon's land-use program has been under attack from the same forces that brought us Measure 37. Little by little, lot by lot, timber and real estate interests, developers and their enablers in legislatures, commissions, councils and land management divisions have been busy night and day eviscerating the system.

In 2004, taking advantage of a pro-growth governor, an ignorant, inattentive and greedy public and anemic opposition, self-serving, anti-government opportunists transformed Oregon from a positive to a negative model of land use protection. Ironically, the passage of Measure 37 helped defeat similar measures in other states.

To "fix" M37, Measure 49 supporters delivered to posterity one of the most extreme property rights laws in the country. They undermined the foundation of Oregon's land use program by reaffirming the premise of Oregonians in Action and (other) Republicans that government takes away people's rights rather than creates and protects them, that people must be paid for following the law or the law must be eliminated.

As temperatures rise, water and oil supplies drop, and a recession lurks behind the next stock report, voters fast-tracked sprawl of up to three houses on prime farm and forest land and even on groundwater-restricted land and conceded as many as 10 houses if loss of value can be substantiated. As if these provisions were not generous enough, M49, unlike M37, allows development rights to be transferred and even offers an ombudsman to grease the skids. Around 7,500 M37 claims have been staked statewide, with additional claims possible under M49.

Adding insult to injury, the governor and his fellow Democrats in the Legislature are eager to revive the Big Look Task Force to "reform" Oregon's land-use laws. With its first look, this development-biased committee found that "Oregon's land use system has protected the agricultural and forestry land base" and "has contained sprawl." Little wonder that a committee so near-sighted faulted the land use program for accommodating too little growth. The Big Look should take another look only if the Legislature appoints new members with 20-20 vision.

Not to be upstaged, *The Register Guard*, in a recent editorial, urged state and local governments to go easy on "vested rights" of M37 claimants and "to allow some subdivisions or commercial and industrial development." Perhaps the editor had in mind the owner of 41 acres of farmland in Yamhill County who "vested" by hastily cobbling together 41 10' by 10' cabins on the 41 one-acre lots of his M37 claim.

Instead of the fix it was touted to be, M49 adds more cogs to an economic engine long overheated by the unlimited use of limited resources. Accumulating and rapidly accelerating environmental crises have made it abundantly clear, however, that growth – smart or otherwise – cannot be accommodated and that a new paradigm is in order.

**W**e can begin by re-prioritizing Oregon's 19 land use goals. Presently, economy is king and the natural environment and farm and forest resources are its abused servants. Under Goal 5: Natural Resources, for example, gravel industry needs trump the protection of farms, forests, wetlands and riparian corridors regardless of the ecological imperative to reduce or eliminate the markets that industry supplies.

State goals must be amended so that clean air and water and abundant productive soils are the foundation of a fertile local economy. An economy that recognizes and develops within natural limits could maintain and sustain indefinitely at a steady state in a closed resource, product and waste loop.

Statewide, I believe we must and we will see the emergence of groups like Lane County's Willamette Farm and Food Coalition (WFFC) as key players in the effort to create a secure and sustainable local food economy. This year the WFFC formed a Farmland Preservation Committee that, among other tasks, will ask county commissioners to inventory and map Lane County's farmland as a first step in establishing agricultural reserves both within and outside urban growth boundaries.

This grassroots, on-the-ground, in-the-ground renaissance reminds us that the true meaning of economy – to economize – is to be frugal, to bring our wants closer in line with our needs, to reduce the size of our carbon footprint. No better place to begin than our own backyards.

It'll be a tough row to hoe, however, with the governor recently saying that slow growth is not acceptable, and the Big Look Task Force looking for ways to help him accelerate growth.

For a governor and Legislature seeking more money for more jobs to build more houses and more roadways for more people to produce more waste, more pollution and fewer resources – and more opportunity to do so under M49 – a few words from *Walden* provide counsel: "A man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone."

*Robert Emmons of Fall Creek is president of LandWatch Lane County, a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting Lane County's farms, forests and open space from urban sprawl.*



I have some questions for the Public Works Department: Why do you lie to us? You haven't replaced anything that you have removed. Why do you remove things that I will never be able to enjoy in my lifetime because it is convenient for you to maintain? Did you think that we wouldn't notice? I hope your karma can handle this because mine wouldn't.

Davy Ray  
Eugene

## GABACHO RACISM

Dear Ms Yamada and Mr. Sprague: I have some comments regarding your letters to the editor printed on Dec. 20. Gabacho racism is still racism, as is Latino racism is still racism. If either of you read last week's (12/20) "¡Ask a Mexican!" with an open and not a "liberal," bleeding heart-filled mind, you would understand that Arellano is a Mexican nationalist and not the humanitarian, compassionate human rights advocate he so slyly portrays himself to be.

I feel the complaints that I expressed in my Nov. 22 letter are justified with Arellano's latest tantrum, and therefore, Mr. Sprague, how can you claim "¡Ask a Mexican!" is "not mean-spirited"? The "liberal" rich fog that your mind is blanketed with is contrary to your asking of readers "be careful not to close your minds too quickly!" You go on to say "mainstream media is a very significant reason why there is not outright revolution in this country."

I ask you: What is the very significant reason why there is not outright revolution in Mexico? I'll answer: The flight of tens of millions of poor, uneducated, superstitious people from their homes in Mexico to go to the U.S. Whether entering with our OK or without is not relevant, it's the fleeing that matters, and also sending billions of dollars back to prop up the illegitimate Mexican government.

That old cliché, "You can't solve your problems by running away from them" definitely applies here. Though Mexican immigrants' rights advocates don't think it applies to them. The greater threat to immigrants from Mexico is NOT the white dominated government of the U.S., it's the Catholic church. Those with true open minds have already figured it out.

What about personal responsibility? The immigrant advocates also seem to think that it does not apply to the poor immigrants. Everyone needs to take responsibility for themselves; responsibility to improve one's life, to lift oneself out of poverty, to become educated and use common sense and not live life superstitiously, and not expect others to throw you a lifeline! As for the subdued masses in the U.S., we have subdued our-

selves by allowing this shit to continue. We are too easily pleased, lazy and enjoy the good life.

Blame not the media, for the media are a creation by people and run by people. We allowed these people to get the best of us and they are only a few and we are too lazy to stop them.

I haven't forgotten about you, Ms. Yamada. The appropriate title of your letter should have been, "Don't Mexicans Get It"? I, as a human being of Dominican parents, know many Mexicans don't like other Latinos who aren't Mexican and want a "Mexicans only" access to the U.S., yet you and others want to bury that negative side regardless how true it is. Forty percent of Mexicans are in poverty, 45 percent of Dominicans, and 70 percent of Haitians. Are you a Mexican nationalist advocate? Are you a human rights advocate? You can't be both. Take another read of Arellano and drop your Mexican Catholic mentality, then you'll see your eyes were closed all along.

Juana Garcia  
Eugene

## LIFE IS OFFENSIVE

In response to Matt Watkins' letter, "Bring Us Together" (and somewhat in regard to Mark Harris' viewpoint, both Dec. 27), the problem here is the padding provided by political correctness. It's not just upper middle-class white folk. (There were many sensitive folks of Latin heritage in uproar over Arellano's column). The problem is those who insist on the cushioning of the art of Correct Politeness. This political art form has slowed to a crawl the United States' progress at combating its problem with racism.

Humor is our only hope at this point. And people should be made to roll their eyes and squirm. Life is offensive. Eugene is not a place to move to escape who you are and what you can, and probably should, become (strong). Tact should be used, especially in public settings (unlike the guy in blackface at the OSU-Stanford game). But in an "intellectually progressive" weekly, you will be tested. Get used to it. But when you make truly cruel "nigger" and "spic" jokes, you are gay. Gay like Bush. Gay like Hitler. Not gay like Dan Savage.

Todd Zimmerman  
Eugene

## STEP AWAY FROM THE BURGER

Regarding one of the most idiotic statements I have heard in awhile: "McDonald's is one of the worst decimators of our planet and single-handedly contributing to obesity in this country" by Kay Porter (12/27). I find it "alternately appalling" that someone with

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