

John Conyers (the chair of the Judiciary Committee) is under pressure to let the bill die in committee. If any of the readers would like to call him and tell him what you think, here are four phone numbers. I got through with the third number. The numbers are (202) 225-5126, 224-3121, 225-3951 and (313) 961-5670.

One more thing: If you're thinking, "Oh, it doesn't matter because Bush will be out of office in a few months anyway," consider this: If a college senior was accused of rape, do you think the local police would say, "Oh, it doesn't matter because he will be graduating next semester anyway" and just let it go?

Ralph J. Forrest-Ball
Eugene

EDITOR'S NOTE: We blogged about it at the time and the daily papers gave it some attention. EW tends to give precedence to local issues.

IT'S A FED DECISION

Why is *EW*, which is campaigning for Kitty Piercy's re-election, echoing one of Jim Torrey's biggest lies? The June 12 cover story by Alan Pittman noted that there is rhetoric that "Kitty Piercy killed the West Eugene Parkway" but the "reality" is "It would have died anyway." Pittman stated that "Even Torrey acknowledges that the WEP might not have been built anyway due to federal environmental problems with building the highway through protected wetlands."

However, the real issue is that the WEP, like all federal aid transportation projects, was a *federal* decision not subject to local votes (of the public or the City Council). I've only tracked the WEP since 1999, but the only times I am aware of *EW* mentioning that the WEP is a federal decision is when I have published letters to the editor and opinion pieces in *EW*. The *Weekly* has also refused countless requests to profile the WETLANDS alternative to the WEP — West Eugene Transportation, Land and Neighborhood Design Solutions (www.greenwasheugene.com/wetlands.html).

On June 19, 2001, then Mayor Torrey was part of an intergovernmental decision of the city, Lane County, state of Oregon and federal government that admit that the WEP could not be legally built. It is hard to find a rational explanation for the refusal of the Piercy re-election campaign to highlight how Torrey subsequently encouraged the state to piss away millions more on bogus "studies" after Torrey admitted the highway was toast.

Mark Robinowitz
Eugene

EDITOR'S NOTE: It's our understanding that for the WEP to be built it would have had to be included in the local TransPlan, approved by the Metropolitan Policy Committee, have an environmental impact statement drafted by ODOT and approved by the FHWA, needed an act of Congress or federal waiver to cross protected BLM wetlands, be approved by the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program, etc. In short, the city or feds can kill such a project, but neither alone can force it to be built. And it appears the WEP would have faced serious funding and environmental obstacles at the federal level if it had passed local scrutiny.

RAILS NOT ROADS

Our future as a civilization is now dependent on creating a public transportation system to survive the end of cheap petroleum and mitigate climate change. The only way to create this transition is through the creation of passenger rail infrastructure to replace the failed highway and freeway systems.

Congressman Peter DeFazio, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, should scrap plans to expand failing highway and freeway systems throughout the country. More freeway and highway infrastructure will only hasten economic and climate chaos and disruption.

The planned expansion of I-5 being promoted in Oregon by Gov. Kulongoski and DeFazio to accommodate more automobiles and long-haul trucks must be stopped and scrapped. People are already driving less, and the trucking industry will

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