

DeFazio on Occupy Wall Street and the future of this country

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prizewinner and *The New York Times* op-ed columnist Paul Krugman too, now that he's "come around" on trade.

Obama's current advisers? "They're dealing with the financial crisis, not the structural economic crisis," he says.

In a recent letter to supporters, DeFazio wrote that there are 150,000 bridges across the nation in need of repair or replacement, and the Willamette River's flood control system is at 85 percent of capacity because the Army Corps needs \$100 million for repairs.

"The vision from the other side is sort of nihilism," DeFazio says. They "want a government we can drown in the bathtub." He points out that if there is a rain-on-snow event and the dams fail, "How much is the damage going to be? More than a \$100 million. How stupid is this non-philosophy of theirs?"

House Republicans are making a mistake, he says, in cutting infrastructure funding. "Tax cuts," he says, "don't create jobs."

What's DeFazio's solution? "A quarter of the deficit is due to people not working," he says, "Give me a hundred billion dollars; let me spend it on infrastructure. For that amount of money, I can put several million to work building stuff that will last for generations." Money borrowed now could be used to fix infrastructure and bridges and create transit systems with long-term benefits, DeFazio says.

County Money

While the politicians in Washington, D.C., debate how to solve the nationwide economic crisis, DeFazio's constituents back home in Oregon want to know where the

man is on the logging and timber payment issues that affect Oregonians.

Back in the 1990s, as the logging wars peaked, counties in Oregon, Washington and California started to get federal payments to make up the massive cutbacks on logging on federal lands that came into place as people began to realize the ecological effects of logging on endangered species like northern spotted owl and salmon. These payments made up for the loss of timber receipts in counties like Lane, where instead of tax revenue-generating private land, large areas are made up of federal land.

In 2000 the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act was introduced to ensure counties would get their needed funding. It was reauthorized in 2008 and expired in September of this year. Now Lane County and other counties like it face a massive budget shortfall.

DeFazio has come up with a trust plan that he hopes would go a long way to solving some of the county funding issues, while at the same time preserving old-growth forests. DeFazio says the plan would be to split the BLM's O&C lands between conservation and logging, with each of the two sections managed by a board of trustees, creating a conservation trust and a timber trust.

So far this plan has not been written up into legislation, DeFazio says, and exactly what percentage of land would go into each trust has not been decided as he is awaiting a detailed inventory of the land in question.

A bill was recently introduced in the Senate to renew the county payments and hopefully, DeFazio says, give counties time to work out a more permanent solution, such as his trust plan.

Wingnut Opposition

DeFazio must have thought he'd fallen down the rabbit hole last year when his first serious opposition for the 4th District congressional seat that he has held for a 23-year stretch arose in the guise of radiation-embracing Tea Party favorite Art Robinson. This opposition got even weirder when it was revealed that this Mad Hatter of a candidate (who did not respond to a request for comment) got \$750,000 from a New York hedge fund manager for his campaign. That same hedge fund manager, Robert Mercer of Renaissance Technologies, has begun to contribute to Robinson again, possibly in opposition to DeFazio's call to reinstate a tax on Wall Street speculators.

"He's capable of raising much more money than a normal nutcase," DeFazio says.

In addition to advocating for small doses of radiation as a health measure and publishing articles in his newsletter *Access to Energy* on the benefits of dumping nuclear waste in the oceans, Robinson has claimed that human-caused global warming doesn't exist, that the pesticide DDT should never have been banned and that public schools should be abolished, calling them "nationalized child-abuse." (See *EW* 8/12/2010)

Robinson raised more than \$1 million for his last bid against DeFazio and has already begun fundraising for the 2012 race. But some of Robinson's Federal Elections Commission filings look a little odd. According to his FEC filings, Robinson reported receiving aggregate contributions over the maximum of \$4,800 from 19 different donors. And 12 contributors made aggregate contributions exceeding \$2,400 after the date of the May 18 Republican primary, but do not appear to have made any indication that Robinson was raising this to retire his primary election debt.

Robinson has indicated his belief that he was entitled to raise funds under a separate \$2,400 limit for both the Independent and Constitution Party because he was a candidate for those parties, as well as the Republican Party. The FEC has indicated in the past that this is not the case.

Of the 50 or so donors to his 2012 effort listed so far on the FEC filings website, only seven are from Oregon.

Since the 2010 election, Robinson has retained the media limelight with attacks on Oregon State University. He accused the school of retaliating against his children because of his 2010 campaign against DeFazio. Robinson's accusations appeared to have been based on DeFazio's support for Oregon's public universities and community colleges. Robinson called OSU a liberal socialist institution and labeled a professor in the nuclear engineering department a "militant feminist."

As he approaches an election year where President Obama remains unpopular, Republicans control the House and his opponent could be able to raise millions against him, is DeFazio worried?

"I think I can be outspent 2-1 and still win," he says. **EW**

To see DeFazio's take on Occupy Wall Street, go to his YouTube page at <http://wkly.ws/14i>