

Fixing fences is a good plan. Dealing with our waste in a more evolved way will solve the bird problems that are the real source of money lost by Lane County to control wildlife.

*Gail Gould
Pleasant Hill*

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Sacramento Bee story cites nationwide, not California, statistics.

HOYLE'S GOOD RECORD

EW recently [7/19] published in its Slant column a piece about Rep. Val Hoyle, which called into question her environmental leanings and pointed out her environmental voting score from the Oregon League of Conservation Voters. Hoyle has received one of the highest scores for representatives of that district, and she has been someone we can consistently work with in the Legislature. We have none of the concerns that were alluded to in that piece and think Hoyle is doing a great job at making sure her constituents have access to clean water and air and protect the natural legacy in Oregon.

*Karen Booth,
Chair of the Lane Co. Chapter,
Oregon League of Conservation Voters*

SPENDY BUS LANE

I wanted to support the West Eugene EmX. I spent years exposing the problems of the proposed West Eugene Parkway. Documenting the WEP's illegalities helped persuade the Federal Highway Administration to reject the project. But I have read the EmX Environmental Assessment and can't support this project either.

Public transit can be planned well and it can be planned poorly. It can be designed to be cost-efficient and it can be grossly overpriced to give megabucks to road construction companies. Journalists have an obligation to describe the difference if they are watch dogs and not lap dogs.

Oregon law requires coordination of transportation and land use. In 2002 the State Supreme Court upheld Hood River's restriction on big box megastores. The city of Eugene rubberstamped more big boxes, both under Republican Mayor Torrey and under Democrat Mayor Piercy.

The west Eugene line would be about \$100 million, a bit spendy for a bus lane that is partly in mixed traffic, especially since giant bridges and overpasses are not planned.

The EmX study ignores the fact that car traffic has peaked in Lane County, Oregon and the U.S., according to the Lane Council of Governments, ODOT and FHWA websites. The rise in the price of petroleum forced some reduction in travel demand. Nearly all of Oregon's oil comes from the almost depleted Alaska Pipeline and transportation planning — for EmX or for widening highways — must consider oil depletion when estimating future needs.

*Mark Robinowitz
PeakTraffic.org
SustainEugene.org*

THERE ARE NO JOBS

Jeff Zekas of Veneta writes [Letters, 8/9] that all homeless people are narcissistic, selfish, immature folks who choose not

to work, or live in an apartment, or get a job! And that they are not on the street by accident but by choice. He also states that those who are mentally deficient made themselves that way by drug abuse (alcohol is a drug). This is in some cases true; however, this not true for the majority of homeless persons. As a homeless disabled vet I am not a drunk, tweek, liar or thief. Yes, I do have a 36-year-old motorhome to live in, and by the grace of God and a lot of help from St. Vincent de Paul, I have a place to put it.

I would love to be able to work as would many, many other homeless folk. Get a job? What job? There are no jobs. No phone, no home equals no job or apartment. I can't afford an apartment with the income I receive from Uncle Sam.

Mentally deficient by choice? No! As in all groups of people there are good and bad; that's life. I challenge Mr. Zekas to come see for himself the other side of the coin. Come see just what is possible when homeless men are given a chance. Come see me, sir, at the corner of Elmira and Iowa, the vacant lot with the white motor home.

*R. Hightower
Homeless in Eugene*

DUST NOT THE ISSUE

Enough with the dust! I've been following with some amusement the recent spate of letters worried about coal dust from trains through Eugene. I grew up near some of the busier coal-hauling railroads in the Midwest (from five to 20 coal trains per day), and I never once saw dust billowing off a train or accumulations of coal dust near the tracks.

Yes, coal trains do lose dust, but nearly all of it happens near the mine when the trains first get up to speed and the finer particles are caught in the wind. Eugene is over 1,000 rail miles from the mines, not especially windy, and trains will be traveling at reduced speed through town. Dust losses average out to a pound per mile from mine to port, but losses through Eugene will be some tiny fraction of that — small enough that you will never notice it and your neighbor's barbecue smoke will be more of a health concern.

I make this argument not because I like coal exports, but rather because baseless NIMBY worries will be quickly washed aside when the time comes for decisions. If you want to stand against coal trains, here are some valid global-scale arguments:

Coal is the worst fossil fuel in terms of climate change and air pollution, so we need to burn less, not more. Fossil fuels are a finite resource and replacements are not yet adequate; therefore exporting our coal is not in our national interest.

And some valid local arguments: Long trains tie up crossings for longer, preventing access by emergency vehicles. More trains means increased risk of fatal collisions with vehicles and pedestrians. The track to Coos Bay is not maintained to modern standards and is vulnerable to washouts and landslides. This means a very real risk of derailments with environmental consequences (think diesel fuel and big piles of coal in salmon streams).

*Mark Luterra
Corvallis*

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