

MORE BAD POLICY

Chop. Chop. Tim-ber! Whether you hear it or not, that's the sound of a tree being felled in the forest. And if Rep. Peter DeFazio's and Sen. Ron Wyden's proposed O&C timber lands legislation becomes law, you will definitely hear it loud and clear as 1.6 million acres of public forests are turned over to private industry for chopping. How bad is this legislation? After DeFazio's bill passed in the majority Republican House, Democrat President Barack Obama vowed to veto it as bad environmental policy.

DeFazio and Wyden refer to the underfunded counties where O&C timber lands are domiciled as financial "sacrifice zones" that can only be saved by increasing the cut. And yet, in this November's election, citizens of these counties voted down legislation to increase property taxes to beef up their budgets. They haven't paid their fair share of taxes for decades thanks to O&C timber lands logging receipts, and aren't about to start now. Ditto for the private forest industry, which enjoys preferential tax treatment. There's no sense of shared sacrifice in the "sacrifice zones" other than the sacrifice of public forests.

Whether it's digging holes or cutting trees, we need to stop this insanity of doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different outcome. How about, instead of sacrificing our public forests, we all pay our fair share of taxes and base important policy decisions on science instead of politics?

If trees were people, like corporations, and could talk, like money, they might explain to policymakers that intact forests keep our air and water clean, provide homes for diminishing wildlife populations, create beautiful places for folks to recreate and help

save the overheating world by sequestering carbon. If you hear this, then let your elected representatives hear from you. Tell them to cut it out. No public forest sacrifice zones for counties that won't make sacrifices themselves. No increased cut for private logging interests stuck — like DeFazio and Wyden — in the politics of the past.

Benton Elliott
Eugene

EXPOSING CORRUPTION

The "She Who Watches" column "Fake Apologies, False Hope" in the Oct. 31 issue was excellent. Some who are Oregon tribal members were very impressed with Kayla Tufti's excellent observations and thinking.

There is a budding movement taking form that has to do with exposing corrupt tribal council administrations supported by the U.S. Department of the Interior/BIA. Those council administrations are benefiting personally by running the tribe's business as their private corporations. This is especially true with the tribal gaming industry.

Therefore, as Native people, we desire to move away from doing business in the Western corporate ways and more toward the Native North American ways. Some tribes are already leaning in that direction. We hope we can create an effective way to influence that process.

The words "marginalization" and "evasion of accountability" in the article really strike a chord with we North American Natives.

Tom Richmond
Scottsburg

BROKEN PROMISES

The mission of the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency reads: *To protect public health, community well-being and the*

environment as a leader and advocate for the improvement and maintenance of air quality in Lane County.

The Seneca Biomass company has a string of broken promises including the excessive release of carbon monoxide, dark smoke and acetaldehyde. The company ran seven months with its pollution controls for nitrogen oxides switched off. Now they want LRAPA to raise the pollution cap of particulate matter from 14 tons a year to 17 tons.

Last month, the World Health Organization classified outdoor air pollution as carcinogenic to humans. Their evaluation showed an increasing risk of lung cancer with increasing levels of exposure to particulate matter and air pollution.

LRAPA needs to do its job. Tell Seneca Biomass NO; hell NO!

Sarah Ruth
Eugene

MONEY FOR HEALTH CARE

Gwen Heineman seems to have failed to look at the Cover Oregon website (coveroregon.com) before writing her letter [11/21]. Her letter is filled with misinformation. Maybe the numbers she quotes for the cost of insurance are the numbers she got for her income level. If you ask for costs after entering an income estimate, you will get costs for someone with the income you entered in the form. The numbers she quotes would be for a single person making more than \$45,000 a year, which means no subsidy is available. If you are single and making that much money, you do not need a subsidy to pay \$480 a month for health insurance.

If your income is about \$20,000 a year, you will pay \$70 a month for pretty good health insurance (the cheapest silver plan) with a \$750 per year deductible and

very low co-pays. See coveroregon.com/individual/browse/results.

The cost shown is the cost after applying the advanced premium tax credit to the cost of the plan. On the "exchange," this plan would cost \$480 a month with no tax credit. A person with an estimated income of \$20,000 and living in the 97402 zip code could claim a tax credit of \$411 per month or \$4,932 per year. You can pay for your insurance with the advanced premium tax credit before you even claim the tax credit on your tax return. That means you can apply your tax credit and receive health care starting in January, if you sign up before Dec. 4.

You can sign up online. Read the instructions! Print the forms from the Cover Oregon website and fill them out by hand for yourself, then if you have Internet Explorer, you can fill them out online and submit them online. You can also mail in your paper copy. The form has a lot of pages, but you don't need to use very many of the pages if there are only one or two people in your household.

Ann M. Tattersall
Eugene

CHANGE IS NECESSARY

The climate change conference is ending as I write. It has brought together hundreds of countries, scientists and climate activists, yet has elicited practically no attention from the U.S. media or the U.S. government.

Our neighbors to the south were poignant: the most violent tornado in the history of the world, droughts, rising sea levels, storms, floods and extreme weather. They cried out, "Will you help us?" Basically, the response from industrialized countries was "No."

VIEWPOINT BY PETE SORENSON

Out of Pocket

ENERGY CONSERVATION SAVES EVERYONE MONEY

Saving energy and improving energy efficiency is vital to restoring the environment, reducing carbon emissions that contribute to global climate change and creating sustainable jobs. It's being debated all over the world, but the debate over how to get there has left out something more meaningful to a lot of Lane County residents: saving them money.

In the long term, saving energy means saving money. Since Lane County is a net energy user, this is money that goes outside of our area, in effect transferring money from us to someone else — usually oil and natural gas companies. Savings can be realized on both small or large activities. For example, walking saves money on gasoline. On building and construction projects, an investment to save energy every day can lead to a real money savings.

Small projects could mean installing better insulation, windows, solar heating or even a new

energy-efficient ductless heating/cooling system in your home. On a larger scale, my intern, Julia Schmidt (who's here in Eugene for a year and helping me, including researching this column) recently visited with Executive Director Terry McDonald at the St. Vincent de Paul Society of Lane County (SVDP) building at 11th and Oak in Eugene. This building is heated and cooled by a deep geothermal well. McDonald says that the building saves energy and money, and residents of the building have low energy bills.

The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that the average U.S. household could shave about 70 percent off its heating bill and 40 percent off its cooling bill with a geothermal heating/cooling pump system.

If we look across the Atlantic, the Germans want to cut 20 percent of their energy use by 2020. The German government offers its residents different kinds of grants and low-interest loans to make their homes more energy

efficient. Another part of the effort is that by the end of 2020, all newly built houses need to be passive houses — nearly zero energy buildings. A passive house concept is today's highest energy standard. At the International Passive House Conference, experts estimate that of the 114 passive houses examined, energy savings averaged 90 percent.

Passive houses are very well insulated and are virtually air-tight. This protects the inhabitants against cold in the winter and heat in the summer.

We'd be smart to significantly increase our use of incentives to bring about greater savings, both in money and energy.

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