

TRY NOT TO BREATHE

Thank you to Camilla Mortensen and Kelly Kenoyer for delivering news that matters in the Dec. 28 edition of *Eugene Weekly*!

What do your two articles, “Weed Wages Water War” and “Air Quality in Oakridge,” have in common? Both articles shed light on shady backdoor deals that privatize clean air and water.

How does LRAPA fit into all this corporate swindling? Well, In April 2017, EPA staff interviewed LRAPA permit writers and discussed the small town of Oakridge which is a “non-attainment area” (i.e. does not meet air quality standards for particulate matter) and therefore unable to support new industrial growth.

But now EPA head Scott Pruitt has dismantled the new source review process (which for years has served to protect air quality from industrial pollution) and is giving LRAPA the green light to change the permitting program.

Under Pruitt’s new EPA, LRAPA will change Oakridge’s designation from a “non-attainment” area to a “re-attainment” area, thereby allowing new industry to “buy” its way out of air-quality regulations by purchasing “offsets” (in the form of woodstoves for a few Oakridge residents).

Are other federal non-attainment areas becoming the new focus for offset banking under Pruitt’s new EPA?

As an Oakridge resident and a registered nurse, I demand that we stop compromising public health for higher profit. We must fight against the privatization of our air and water.

Betsy Johnson
Oakridge

LET US VOTE!

I signed a petition to get a spray ban initiative on the May ballot in Lane County. Now I hear that even though the county clerk assured the chief petitioners that the

initiative had qualified by first, satisfying the single subject and full text rules and second, by turning in enough certified signatures, a new obstacle has reared its ugly face in the form of the “separate vote” rule.

Now my right to vote on this “people-proposed” law is being threatened, again. How is this possible? When enough people get it together to satisfy all the steps of the process, how can county officials invent barricades that deny the people access to the ballot box? Could they be in the pocket of the opposition special interests, perchance?

I was born and raised in California before moving to Eugene in 2014. In California, the proposed aerial spraying campaign to allegedly combat the Light Brown Apple Moth was shot down by fierce citizen opposition. Why the widespread spraying of forestland with herbicides is tolerated in Oregon is beyond belief.

John Thielking
Eugene

COUNTY MUST ANSWER

On Dec. 19, more than 50 Lane County voters turned out at the Board of Commissioners meeting to demand accountability and transparency in the initiative process in Lane County.

Voters demanded an explanation from the county government about why the Freedom from Aerial Spraying of Herbicides Bill of Rights charter amendment was being kept from the ballot based on the County Election Clerk’s decision that the initiative did not comply with the separate-vote rule.

Despite repeated requests, no explanation has been forthcoming.

Alarming, rather than answering to the voters for the county’s actions, Lane County — through its county counsel Stephen Dingle — is leaving it to the timber industry to provide that explanation.

On Dec. 21, in the legal action filed by the initiative’s chief petitioners challenging the clerk’s determination, the county

HOT AIR SOCIETY BY TONY CORCORAN

Horse Pucky Debate

ON GETTING CEDRIC’S GOAT

Remember, dear reader, last year I carefully explained the difference between a horse race and a political race? (In a horse race the *whole* horse races, remember?) Apt metaphors live on. Lately there is more equine political scatology in the air.

Sad news out of the Bel-Air neighborhood in Los Angeles recently: A box filled with horse manure addressed to Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin was left at his neighbor’s home. The box was wrapped in Christmas paper and labeled as coming from the “American people.” Sophomoric puerile poop story! Why didn’t we Oregonians think of that?

We have a ton of horseshit up here and plenty of candidates! Out of respect for the post office we could carefully cure our manure, legalize it even, put it in glass jars and burp it daily until it gets down to 62 percent relative humidity so it won’t weigh as much to ship. Then double wrap it in Ziploc bags, throw in a little baby powder to cover the barnyard bouquet and you’re in business.

Obviously the leading candidate, the most powerful Republican in Oregon, the man who leads the nation in contributions from the anti-net neutrality crowd, Congressman Greg Walden is first in line.

What do you get for the guy who has everything and who sold out Oregonians with the Republican federal tax giveaway? Bullshit? Naw, unless it’s from one of the “welfare grazers” on BLM land. I’d rather have one of them wild Steens stud muffins from the Kiger mustangs. Horseshit rules!

The chief sponsors of the initiative that became Measure 101 certainly deserve the attention of Oregon voters as we approach Jan. 23. Representatives Julie Parrish of Forest Grove and Medford’s Sal Esquivel and their Stop Healthcare Taxes political action committee rank high in the horseshit hierarchy handicap.

But Christmas gift giving, like any charitable act, is best conducted locally. Lane County’s own House District 7’s Cedric Hayden, another of the chief sponsors of this assault on Oregon’s poorest and most vulnerable, can receive your gift in person. That’s right, just show up at the Valley River Inn at 11 am on Thursday, Jan. 11. The Lane County League of Women Voters is sponsoring a debate on Ballot Measure 101 with Cedric Hayden (opposed) and Labor Commissioner candidate Val Hoyle arguing in support.

While you’re there ask Cedric about his Voters’ Pamphlet statement paid for by Julie Parrish. He’s also been quoted in *The Register-Guard* as saying he would bring his solutions for funding Medicaid and rural health care if Measure 101 is defeated. What are his solutions? Are they hiding in plain sight, in the stalls of my wife’s horses? Come on, man: Show us the money! For the record, before PETA beats me up for animal abuse, both Luna and Mojave are of age and have signed “mature manure” release forms.

And ask Cedric about his “no” group’s intentional misrepresentation in the voters’ pamphlet. In addition to paying for most of the arguments in opposition, why did Parrish think it was a good idea to put phony arguments in favor in order to “break up the monotony of the other side’s argument”?

Finally ask Cedric why both Republican Senate leader Ted Ferrioli and Senate President Democrat Peter Courtney stated in their Voters’ Pamphlet argument in favor:

“Oregon has a plan for funding healthcare that really works for all of us. That plan is Measure 101.”

Here’s why. The state estimates that if Measure 101 were to fail, between \$210 million and \$320 million in state revenue would be lost, resulting in a loss of federal matching funds of between \$630 million to \$960 million. Without additional funds or cuts elsewhere, hundreds of thousands of low-income people would lose health care coverage. Show us your plan, Cedric! Be honest. Show us the money.

After the debate, follow Cedric to Salem in February and see how he and Julie vote on tax measures of any sort in the upcoming session.

Maybe by February Oregon will have a better sense of how the looming trillion-dollar federal deficit will affect Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid in the future. No state is more reliant on income taxes for state revenue than Oregon. Personal income tax accounts for 87 percent of the state’s general fund. Maybe Cedric will have some answers in February. Where’s Mr. Ed when we need him?

Meanwhile, don’t forget to vote Yes on Measure 101 by Jan. 23.

Former state Sen. Tony Corcoran of Cottage Grove is a retired state employee.

