

CARBON DIVIDENDS

Peter DeFazio states he will “aggressively push for Congress ... to curb carbon emissions” (*EW*, Nov. 19). Rep. DeFazio has the opportunity to make good on that promise right now by supporting HR 7173, the “Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act.”

This act will reduce U.S. carbon emissions at least 40 percent within 12 years while creating an estimated 2.1 million clean energy economy jobs, and will save lives and health care costs by improving air quality. The act works by putting a steadily rising fee on fossil fuel extraction, then returning these fees as a dividend to individuals to spend as they see fit.

This plan is progressive because lower-income households generally have a lower carbon footprint; businesses and individuals using the most carbon fuel will pay the majority of fees. In this market-based approach, the drive to create new innovative alternative technology will come from the rising cost of carbon fuel rather than, as DeFazio believes, the need for government to make massive investments in renewable energy.

Given our current political environment, “growing government” with new programs and regulations is a dead-in-the-water strategy. Meanwhile, CO₂ continues to pour into our atmosphere and rising temperatures continue to create climate disasters that cost us billions of dollars to mitigate.

HR 7173 was introduced by a bipartisan group of representatives who understand the need to work across the aisle if we are going to be serious about reducing carbon emissions now.

Betty Grant
Eugene

SPORTING SEXISM

What if the University of Oregon had a top-5 ranked basketball team with excellent chances of making it into the Final

Four in March? What if that team was laden with stars, including an All-American who is likely the best player to ever wear an Oregon basketball uniform?

And what if that team recently drew almost 9,000 spectators at Matthew Knight Arena to see them knock off previously unbeaten Mississippi State? And what if that elite team receives less coverage in *The Register-Guard* sports pages than another team plagued by injuries and struggling to overcome mediocrity?

This isn't a hypothetical situation. It is a reality.

What could be the reason for the disparity in press coverage by *The Register-Guard*? The elite team is the women's, and the struggling team is the men's.

The Jan. 13 women's game with UCLA got only a small mention on sports page three.

Wayne Ferrell
Eugene

WAR ALL THE TIME

Never have American foreign-policy absurdity and arrogance been more conspicuously on display.

Our State Department, Department of “Defense” and their faithful media stenographers declare a continuing U.S. right to violate national sovereignty and wage war in a second country (Syria) to “maintain stability” against defeated mercenary invaders (secretly supported by the U.S. to dislodge this country's elected government) to serve the interests of third and fourth countries (Israel and Saudi Arabia) and counter the “influence” of fifth and sixth countries (Iran and Russia), both of which are legally present in Syria at its invitation and deserve significant credit for defeating the invaders.

Combined with the congressional decision to discontinue U.S. support of the murderous Saudi/Emerati blitzkrieg upon Yemen, this is likely to seriously endanger

employment and profits of the weapons industry upon which the American economy so heavily depends.

Technology transfers can present opportunities to secure the “peace dividend” expected when the Cold War ended — a hope quickly smothered by Bush senior's Gulf War — to transition from a death-and-destruction economy to one benefiting the public with new employment, universal Medicare, state-supported higher education like other developed countries, infrastructure upgrades including national high-speed rail and expansion of renewable energy industries.

Jack Dresser, co-director
Al-Nakba Awareness Project
Springfield

TRADING POSTS

I can't help but wonder how my tax dollars are being spent.

My preference would be to spend my hard earned dollars creating places of peace.

Imagine what we could do with 5 billion dollars!

Walls are for those who fear. Trading posts are for those who share.

We could build the world's most fantastic trading post ever!

Jeff Iak
Harrisburg

COUNCIL PRIORITIES

Recently, I went to the last of the five Eugene Climate Change Action Plan 2.0 presentations only to find it didn't happen. I knew about it because someone from 350 Eugene sent me an email. For something so important (is it?) on the City Council agenda, there was zero publicity about these events.

The city heavily promotes its Eugene downtown events. Does the end of civilization as we know it not rate with music on the plaza? It's outrageous! What does

the City Council take seriously? Developer tax breaks to build overpriced hotels and crappy student apartments?

There's been no headway on homelessness, or “missing middle” housing, and what little they do get done only benefits downtown.

Sure, there'll be lots of slide shows with lots of “staff” talking, talking, talking, but when does anything actually happen? Especially, taking charge of how this one small city handles its climate change obligations.

Four years of solid scientific input by civil society groups, and council never even considers using some of these knowledgeable citizens in the “stakeholder groups” that supposedly will make the important decisions to save us all from the very obvious climate changes we are experiencing, which they are largely responsible for.

Robin Bloomgarden
Eugene

FRESH AIR

We all have a right to breathe, and yet we tolerate violations of that right from several sources. No sooner did we ban field burning than the pollution caused by slash burning and the use of wood-burning stoves became more obvious.

Slash burning, like field burning before it, is a gross violation of the right to breathe that benefits a few at the expense of the many — all of us. It should be banned.

Is the reduction in air quality caused by wood-burning stoves a more complex problem? I think not. Throwing soot into our lungs by burning wood for home heating is rightly banned.

But while the technology for eliminating the soot is readily available, some folks can't afford it and, for them, there's an exception to the rule. This is not unreasonable, as cold homes can be as deadly as soot-laden air. But it imposes an awful burden on all of us, not only but especially

VIEWPOINT BY LYNN PORTER

Treat the Homeless as Citizens

BEING POOR IS NOT A CRIME, THOUGH THE CITY PRETENDS IT IS

The city of Eugene must stop persecuting the homeless and provide shelter.

Being homeless is *not* a way of life. For most people, it's temporary. They're on the street because they don't make enough money in their low-paid service jobs to pay Eugene's outrageous rents. The only thing they have in common is that they're poor and unhoused.

We have the elderly, the disabled, kids and women on the street. One woman told the Eugene City Council a while back that she had been repeatedly beaten and raped, and she felt she couldn't tell the police because she was “illegally camping.” We've been told that homeless women are terrified.

Every winter, homeless people die. Many get sick from being exposed to the rain and cold. It is a miserable, dangerous way to live, and most people do *not* choose it.

Meanwhile the city has failed to provide anywhere near the amount of shelter needed, and it actively persecutes the homeless, siccing the cops on them every night, forcing them to move, depriving them of sleep, giving them tickets they can't afford to pay and putting them in jail if they don't show up in court.

This must stop. The city has been threatened with a lawsuit if it continues to criminalize homelessness. The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in a Boise, Idaho, case that local governments cannot make it a crime to camp when people have no other choice. This applies to the whole West Coast, including Eugene. Yet the City Council refuses even to discuss the city's camping ban.

Homeless Action demands that the city of Eugene:

1. Stop citing people for camping on public land as long as they don't break any other laws, don't disturb the neighbors or make a mess.

2. Hire the homeless to deliver and pick up trash bags from camps, provide cheap camping toilets that use plastic bags for waste, and put more trash cans and public restrooms or porta-potties where needed.

3. Create a lot more legal “rest stop” camps around the city, on city-owned or leased land, managed by nonprofits, even if they have to override neighborhood opposition. This program has been proven to work. We just need a lot more of them.

4. Provide more city land for the car camps run by St. Vincent de Paul or other nonprofits.

5. Set up a large low-barrier homeless shelter.

6. Scatter some Conestoga huts, lockable only from the inside, around town on city land, to be used on a first-come first-served basis by individuals who cannot tolerate group shelters.

Lynn Porter ran the Homeless Action email list (Google group) for the last seven years and continues to run the Facebook page.