

PERS facts

Regarding the guest column, "The PERS earthquake: A damage assessment" by Adam Davis: A little bit of knowledge is dangerous, especially when it is used by Mr. Monday Morning Quarterback Davis.

Fact: The Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) program was not an option by educators, as we all were signed up.

Fact: The PERS pick-up and required 6 percent pay reduction was part of the salary. Several times, it was our only raise.

Fact: The state was supposed to invest the money, and not funnel it off into budget balancing.

Fact: The state representatives were told by the PERS lawyers exactly what they were signing

Fact: Our lawyer advised that the state would come up short when we started retiring if they didn't change their investment strategy, as we negotiated to have some control over our money.

The state must honor their obligations instead of pretending to have a budget surplus. Anyone investing 12 percent of their salary over 30 years in a flexible fund should have done well, especially if they put their money in before 2000. The 1990s were fabulous.

This is a contract issue, and not a social issue.

STEVE CARLSON
Tygh Valley

Riverfront in trouble

What a wonderful time to be living in Astoria. You can walk down 11th Street to the river and, pretty much, stroll either east or west, with a lot of open space to view the magnificent Columbia River.

There are many places along this ancient waterway that have views, but only Astoria sits on the widest breadth, as it clashes into the Pacific Ocean, an estuary and special eco-system, with the opportunity to witness the coming and going of commercial vessels and the ritual of riverboat pilots embarking and disembarking to guide these giants safely through the channel to their destinations.

When we encourage tourists to come to one of our many extraordinary events, they, too, can use the Riverwalk and enjoy what the citizens of Astoria get pleasure doing on a daily basis. Future Astoria citizens will not have that opportunity or pleasure, because this generation of civic leaders has decided that the part of the Columbia shores within the domain of the city of Astoria should be privatized.

"It's a working waterfront," but we will create "40-foot corridors in between to preserve views" and "40-foot setbacks to soften the impact."

Oregon's two-year tab for wildfires: \$200 million

The Daily Astorian

The Oregon Department of Forestry spent \$200 million battling wildfires over the past two seasons.

The figure does not include the dozens of homes lost, the impact to communities, or the loss of valuable natural resources, according to the department.

"We're faced with a daunting task," Tom Fields, the department's fire prevention coordinator, said in a statement. "With drought conditions plaguing much of the state, it is crystal clear that, as a society, we all need to put fire prevention practices front and center in our daily lives."

The department, which oversees nearly 16 million acres of state forestland, reported that 70 percent of wildfires are caused by people. Human-caused fires are anything not started by lightning and include outdoor debris burning, campfires, smoking, equipment use, fireworks, ammunition, exploding targets and arson.

While Fields said some fires are accidental, many result from carelessness, such as burning yard debris during warm, windy conditions.

In 2014, the department responded to 171 debris burn fires

Land conservation fund touches all

We were very pleased to see the recent editorial urging Congress to support the Land and Water Conservation Fund ("Most popular program you've never heard of," *The Daily Astorian*, May 5). As one of the non-profit land trusts that conserve special places along the South Washington and North Oregon Coasts and the Columbia River, the Land and Water Conservation Fund is one of the most important conservation programs we have. And although few people have heard about LWCF, it is very likely that the program has touched all of our lives through the parks, trails, boat access, and wildlife areas it has helped protect.

Right now, the most important challenge facing LWCF is protecting

the fund itself from expiring. Unless Congress acts soon, this 50-year-old historic program will expire in five short months. Congress needs to reauthorize LWCF and keep its original, intended purpose: to protect, enhance, and steward parks and public lands for the benefit of all Americans.

The Pacific Coast is recognized as one of Oregon and Washington's most special places. Our organization, along with the Nature Conservancy, Forterra, the North Coast Land Conservancy and many, many others, feel pride in working to maintain the coast's beauty and vibrancy. We are fortunate that both U.S. Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley in Oregon, along with Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray in

Washington state, are strong champions for LWCF. They, along with many others across the country, are fighting to sustain the program, so that it will continue to bring great benefits to all of us.

We thank *The Daily Astorian* for highlighting the value of LWCF for Oregonians. We can continue to thank and encourage our senators working back in Washington, D.C., to keep America's premier conservation program alive, so they know how important the Northwest's natural legacy is for all of us.

GLENN LAMB
Vancouver, Wash.

Editor's note: Glenn Lamb is the executive director of the Columbia Land Trust.

Sometime in the future, if you want to watch the river pilots in action, the private owners of the river views can invite a few friends over for spectacular front row seats, while the majority of the citizens can crowd into 40-foot corridors and squint for a glimpse.

When there are river events, who needs some sort of sprawling river park for the public? In Astoria we like to gather in the parking lot of the Maritime Museum. Who wants grassy areas with picnic tables and lots of benches, when you can walk down to the 14th Street 20-foot by 20-foot river park and sit on the one bench?

Today and forever, the citizens of Oregon are indebted to Gov. Tom McCall, who signed into law the Oregon Beach Bill. It was a bold decision to preserve the Oregon Coast for the people. From low tide to high tide, there will be no buildings constructed to obliterate the Oregon view of the Pacific Ocean.

Sometimes I believe Astoria is one of the most progressive little towns on the West Coast, and then other times I believe we are a little town, with too much little-town-mentality, too much greed, and no bold direction. The city keeps having public hearings on the Riverfront Vision Plans, but when the public shows up to unanimously voice opposition to 35-foot to 45-foot buildings on the waterfront, they are dismissed with "Not everyone in this city ... feels that there should be no development along the river."

Of course not. There are, surely, developers and profiteers chomping at their bits to start construction as soon as the city administration gives them the green light by ignoring public opinion.

LARRY ALLEN
Astoria

Idea inspires action

I'm inspired by the May 27 *Daily Astorian* article about beach balls gently scaring sea lions away from our lo-

cal docks ("Can beach balls banish sea lions?"). If only beach balls would banish Oregon LNG from the Columbia River.

The company's executives and financial backers are as stubborn as sea lions. They mock Clatsop County's refusal to grant a permit for its proposed pipeline. They reject Oregon's right to enforce its own laws. They scoff at Oregon's land use, air quality and water quality rules. They ignore the risk of building in an earthquake and tsunami zone at the project's Skipanon River site — a sand spit on fill below sea level. They pooh-poo private property rights and trespass on land they were denied entry to.

Oregon LNG's CEO said the company would nicely decorate the company's two proposed 17-story gas storage tanks, each bigger around than a downtown Portland city block. He might like playing with paint, and we might want to play with beach balls, but Oregon LNG is playing with our lives and our home.

Who can make this destructive greed-driven proposal go away? We can.

Urge Gov. Brown to tell the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) that this proposal doesn't comply with county and state law and therefore needs to be denied.

Contact her at www.oregon.gov/gov/Pages/share-your-opinion.aspx or (503) 378-4582.

Testify at this summer's city of Warrenton public hearing about Oregon LNG. You need to be one of dozens — even hundreds — of people reminding Warrenton City Commissioners that Oregon LNG does not belong here. The hearing won't be a day at the beach, but it could save our communities.

Find out more about Oregon LNG and the Warrenton hearing at a free community information workshop on Thursday, June 18, from 6-8 p.m. at the Warrenton Community Center, 170 S.W. Third St. The meeting is presented by Columbia Riverkeeper and Columbia Pacific Common Sense, the local NO LNG group. For more information, call 503-338-6508 or go to www.columbiariverkeeper.org

LAURIE CAPLAN
Astoria

Cruelty to birds

Agents of the law are actively searching for the criminal who shot and killed some seven sea lions over the past few weeks. At the same time, agents of the law have been authorized to shoot and kill hundreds, perhaps thousands, of cormorants. Both

species feed on salmon. Am I missing something here?

TESS CHEDSEY
Warrenton

Yes to carbon bill

You don't have to look too far to see signs that climate change is not a distant threat, but hurting people right now. Fifteen counties in Oregon are in a drought emergency, while California, already parched, has zero snow pack to carry them through the summer. Extreme events like this are costly, and without action are only going to become more common.

We in Oregon have a great opportunity, right now, to take action and set a model for limiting the carbon emissions that drive climate change. There are bills in the Oregon Legislature that will put a price on emissions from big-time polluters, and bring the revenue directly back to Oregonians. These polluters can't freely dump waste on public land or in our rivers, so why have they been able to freely pump carbon into our skies?

So far, we the people have been paying the costs of their emissions. It's time for that to change. We can put in place a fair system that doesn't put the burden of emissions or high energy costs on ordinary citizens, and in turn, we can

spur investment in renewable energy. It's a win-win.

Please contact your state representative and tell them to support carbon cap and dividend.

KEVIN FITZGERALD
Portland

Support dividend

These days, it is hard to escape sobering news of our climate crisis' latest developments. As a high school counselor and mother of two, I witness on a daily basis the fears and concerns felt by today's youth about our collective future. They feel helpless when they see our lawmakers deadlocked in heated political, bantering while their future hangs in the balance.

I am convinced that no viable solution to our climate crisis can occur until we internalize the cost of carbon pollution. The Cap and Dividend being considered by the Oregon Legislature this session would do just that. It puts a price on carbon through a permit auction, distributing equitable the revenue raised to every Oregonian.

Cap and Dividend matches the gravity of our climate issue and promises real change. It puts in place sensible, scientifically grounded emission targets, curbing carbon pollution at a pace that climatologists advise is necessary to stabilize our climate's 80 percent reduction of 1990 greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

The dividend offers Oregonians cash on an annual basis — much like the Alaska Permanent Fund. The dividend will allow swift action to remedy our climate crisis, because it promises widespread support from across the political spectrum.

More importantly, however, the dividend offers tangible hope to our youth, by offering them funds they can choose to put towards their future college dreams. For the sake of future generations, we must take bold and courageous action now, to carve out a viable, healthy life-sustaining future for all.

PAMELA WOOD
Portland

**ENERGY COSTS TOO HIGH? TRY LOOKING AT IT IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT.**

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