

OPINION

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OUR VIEW

Offshore drilling here? Absolutely not

In view of all the other environmental rollbacks of the past year, it is unsurprising and yet still somehow shocking that the Trump administration would move toward opening the West Coast to petroleum exploration.

Perhaps best viewed as a middle-finger salute to the president to the three mainland Pacific states that voted for his opponent, the immediate consequences of the oil-leasing plan are likely to be few — at least off Washington and Oregon. Not only will the administration's action be tied up in political wrangling and lawsuits for years, there is substantial room to doubt whether there actually is an economic quantity of fossil fuel to be found here. Past onshore drilling on the Pacific Northwest coast hasn't proven successful and there is reason to suspect that eons of subduction zone earthquakes have rendered our geology uncondusive to the formation of hydrocarbon deposits.

No matter what the prospects for future exploration and exploitation of oil may be in our waters, the governors of Washington, Oregon and California are absolutely right to mount a unified front of opposition to the very notion of drilling. They deserve our ongoing encouragement and support in blocking this blockheaded proposal.

Time after time we have seen horrific environmental costs from oil development and transportation. From the



Associated Press

The oil drilling rig Polar Pioneer is towed toward a dock in Elliott Bay in Seattle in 2015. Working to dismantle his predecessor's environmental legacy, President Donald Trump is hoping to open the entire West Coast and other offshore waters to oil exploration and exploitation.

Exxon Valdez disaster to the BP blow-out in the Gulf of Mexico, the giant corporations that run this industry and the undermanned agencies that police it have shown themselves incapable of guaranteeing there will not be horrific, negligent incidents for which they are loath to take responsibility. Any such "accident" here would have the distinct potential of

killing several crucial industries — tourism, oystering, crabbing and fishing.

As the governors asserted last week in a joint statement, the administration has "chosen to forget the utter devastation of past offshore oil spills to wildlife and to the fishing, recreation and tourism industries in our states. They've chosen to ignore the science that tells us our

climate is changing and we must reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. But we won't forget history or ignore science.

"For more than 30 years, our shared coastline has been protected from further federal drilling and we'll do whatever it takes to stop this reckless, short-sighted action."

Even the somewhat more modest exploratory activities associated with identifying oil deposits in the first place have the potential of harming rockfish habitat, interfering with whale migrations and feeding, and increasing vessel traffic and noise in areas essential to endangered species from Chinook salmon to orcas.

Those who oppose offshore oil and gas exploration in Pacific Northwest and Alaskan waters have been painted as obstructionist worrywarts, more concerned with sea otters and kelp than with energy independence. In fact, few Americans of any political persuasion dispute that, for now, we continue to need fossil fuels to power our vehicles and help warm our homes. But there currently is no shortage of oil that could possibly justify placing the West Coast at risk. Gasoline prices remain stable. Adjusted for inflation, they are about what they were 90 years ago and are less than they were 10 years ago.

Opening the West Coast to drilling is about greed and politics, not about need for energy. It should be stopped dead in its tracks.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Why wouldn't you vote 'yes' on Measure 101?

Why wouldn't you vote "yes" on Measure 101? I can think of many valid and important reasons to do so, but, quite frankly, I have yet to find one good reason to vote "no."

CAROLYN EADY
Astoria

Vote 'no' on Measure 101

Vote "no" on Measure 101. Health care is a benefit we all need however, exempting corporations, unions, and insurance companies themselves from having to shoulder any of the burden of a basic need like health care is just appalling.

This leaves only individuals and families who private pay for their insurance, who have struggled most with rising premiums and eye-popping deductibles, with the responsibility of funding the health care services of our most vulnerable populations. Highly unfair, egregious and inequitable.

Gov. Kate Brown made sure that health care special interests and big corporations don't pay this tax. She also carved out unions and the insurance companies. Private pay individuals have already realized double digit rate increases in their insurance costs.

Oregon's middle and lower class can no longer shoulder the additional cost so corporations, unions and insurance companies can get a free pass. Doctors, nurses, hospitals and other health care special interests will just pass their burden onto ratepayers, so no surprise they're endorsing this measure.

The governor and legislature can fix this without a bailout. A billion health care dollars already blown through by the state — the Cover Oregon website, Medicaid overpayments, etc. — and rather than correct their wasteful spending pattern, they give themselves a pass and provide a massive bailout to special interest. Unacceptable.

Legislators need to go back to the table and create appropriate funding to ensure the needs of students, poor and elderly are met. If we truly believe in equity, then everyone should have skin in the game.

STEPHEN MALKOWSKI
Seaside

Health care is a basic human right

I am a physician, and I believe everyone should have access to health care as a basic human right. Unfortunately, unlike the rest of the developed world, the U.S. has relied on insurance as the way to finance health care, and traditionally, that insurance is provided by employers.

Children, seniors, people with disabilities, and many adults in low wage jobs don't get health insurance through an employer, so we

have Medicaid to provide them with the coverage they need. Medicaid is under threat, and Measure 101 is needed to continue to provide Medicaid to those who need it, and to stabilize the insurance market for individuals who purchase their own insurance.

Physicians like me, our fellow health care providers, and the hospitals we work in, all support Measure 101, even though it taxes us directly. Opponents object to Measure 101 because it will raise taxes, but the costs are even more for all of us if we don't pass it.

Taxes are what we pay to live in a just society, and providing health care for all our citizens is part of how we "promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity" (U.S. Constitution Preamble).

For some vulnerable citizens, the cost of not passing Measure 101 will be paid for with their health, and possibly even their lives. Please join me in voting for Measure 101.

LAURA GORDON, M.D.
Seaside

No health care sales tax

Oregon voters beware. The Measure 101 sales tax on health care will not lower health insurance, nor will it improve health care for Oregon families. However, it is expected that pro-tax bureaucrats in Salem will keep raising this tax, just as most sales taxes around the nation are continually raised.

These are some of those who will be hardest hit:

1. Medicaid providers themselves will be taxed under this new plan, potentially reducing payments to doctors and nurses who already work at cost to help Oregon's neediest citizens.

2. Thousands of college students attending Oregon's universities and community colleges will be forced to pay higher tuition because of the schools' having to pay the health care sales tax.

3. Oregon school districts in the large group market will be hit, causing an expected \$25 million to be sucked out of our local schools.

4. The Public Employee Benefit Board (PEBB) plan will be taxed, pulling \$12 million from our General Fund.

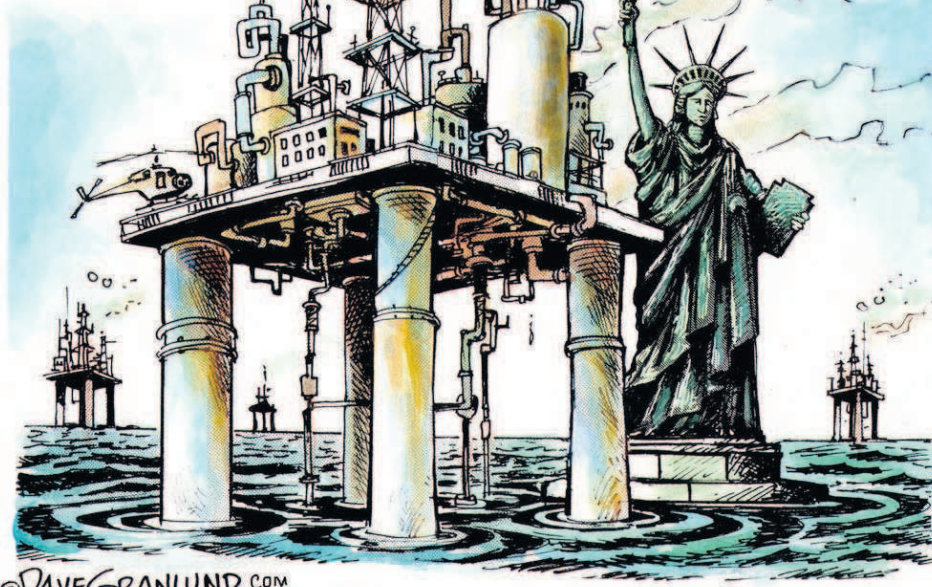
5. Patients in hospitals whose net revenue will have a hard sales tax imposed, and will pass in on to the patients' health insurance costs.

6. Small businesses (under 50 employees) who cover their employees' health care will pay the sales tax.

Large corporations, unions, and the insurance companies themselves, are exempt from the law. Oregon is already the sixth biggest tax and spend state in the nation, at \$9,070 per person.

Please vote "no" on Measure 101 by Jan. 23. It is bad policy for all Oregon families.
CHRIS BRIDGENS
Warrenton

After the offshore drilling ban is lifted...



Measure 101 is good for all

We have an opportunity to do something good for our community by voting "yes" on Measure 101. It will continue health care funding for the working families, children, seniors and disabled who count on Medicaid. That is coverage for about 25 percent of our state — perhaps including you, your relatives or your friends.

The illness of an adult or child can cost someone their job because of time away from work. If that is one of your coworkers or employees, it can possibly jeopardize your own business or job security. The health care providers in Oregon have endorsed Measure 101 because they know a doctor visit to prevent sickness is more effective for a stable society than an emergency room visit after an illness has taken hold.

But there is a minority opposed to Measure 101 because they don't like how our state has addressed Medicaid funding. Is the Oregon budget an example of perfection? Of course not, but to punish 25 percent of our citizens just to prove a point is not good government either. It is cruel.

One in four Oregonians need the health care coverage that will come from passing Measure 101. And you need them to have it, too. I encourage you to vote "yes" on Measure 101.

BRYAN KIDDER
Astoria

Clarification on voters' pamphlet

In response to a letter to the editor from Diane Amos, "Special election concerns," printed in the Cannon Beach Gazette, please

see the below quote taken from a message posted by Secretary of State Dennis Richardson to our website on Dec. 27. It addresses Ms. Amos' concern.

"As you read your Oregon Voters' Pamphlet, you will see arguments submitted in favor and in opposition of the measure to be voted on. Sometimes authors purposely submit 'Yes' arguments in the 'No' column and 'No' arguments in the 'Yes' column. Oregon law requires the Elections Division to place arguments as submitted. If you notice arguments that seem to be in the wrong column, please be aware that this was not an error; it was the desire of the author who submitted the argument."

Secretary Richardson's entire message and attached a letter from the office of Oregon's Attorney General with statutes, and a legal opinion regarding this matter, can be found at bit.ly/2COTpl4

I hope you will print this information for the benefit of Ms. Amos and your other readers.

DEBRA ROYAL
Chief of Staff, Oregon Secretary of State
Salem

Measure 101 protects health care for families

I'm voting "yes" on Measure 101. I'm voting yes to ensure that the most vulnerable Oregonians — children and seniors — continue to get the health care they need. I'm voting yes to ensure that the health care markets remain stable and viable to those who need to buy their own insurance. Measure 101 protects access to health care for Oregon families. Taking health care away from children and seniors is cruel.

BEATRICE "BEBE" MICHEL
Gearhart