

# OPINION

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## OUR VIEW

# Buehler's debate proposal is ironic

**K**nute Buehler has proposed 10 gubernatorial debates, crisscrossing the state. Gov. Kate Brown should accept his offer.

Oregonians throughout the state deserve the firsthand opportunity to evaluate the ideas, aspirations and leadership skills of their next governor.

Even better would be to include Independent and third-party candidates in some of those debates so as to more fully reflect Oregon's political spectrum.

There is irony in Buehler's debate proposal. Until winning the Republican gubernatorial nomination on Tuesday, he largely had been absent from the GOP debates and joint appearances. That strategy did work, enabling the more-moderate Buehler to triumph in a GOP field crowded with conservative candidates.

Brown, who faced only token opposition in the Democratic gubernatorial primary, on Tuesday called for Buehler to join her in three debates and at least two joint appearances before newspaper editorial boards.

By nightfall, Buehler had upped the ante to 10 debates, saying Brown's proposal was yet another example of her not being bold enough. Yet one question for voters to ponder is whether Buehler as governor would be the bold, poten-

tially decisive politician who emerged Tuesday or the reticent, off-stage candidate of the Republican primary.

In any case, Brown and Buehler have much to discuss in front of voters.

This election is an evaluation of what Oregonians could expect from either politician. But it also is a referendum on Brown's leadership since replacing Gov. John Kitzhaber three years ago.

That makes state management — the governor's role as CEO — a dominant issue. It won't be enough for Buehler to say he will lead where Brown failed. He must specify how he would accomplish his goals, how he would bring the state together and how he would prevent the management missteps of recent years.

As for Brown, she has to show that she governs for the entire state, not just her Portland political base. She must own the missteps, as well as the triumphs, of her tenure. She must reveal what she has learned on the job and how that would serve Oregonians for four more years.

Voters should hear the specifics for how each candidate would:

- Strengthen Oregon education and help all Oregon students achieve their potential.
- Confront the costs of the Oregon



Randy L. Rasmussen/The Oregonian

Republican gubernatorial candidate Knute Buehler gathered with supporters in Wilsonville on Tuesday.

Public Employees Retirement System and public-employee health care.

- Overcome Oregon's lack of mental health resources and its high suicide rate.

- Prepare for drought, wildfires and a host of other environmental issues.

- Bridge the economic, technology and transportation gap that separates rural and urban Oregon.

Debates will be a waste if all the candidates do is throw jabs at each other.

That is what Buehler did six years ago in running against Secretary of State Kate Brown. He lost the election, but she got caught up in parrying his jabs instead of defining herself.

Oregonians want, need and deserve robust discussions about our state's future.

## GUEST COLUMN

# Oregonians investing in salmon, students, and Shangrila

**O**regon's North Coast is unique in the world — rugged, beautiful, and rich in both natural resources and community spirit.

With help from the community and from public agencies, Oregon's land trusts are investing in this area to continue to protect our resources. Case in point: more than \$1 million recently awarded from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board to projects spearheaded by two land trusts, the North Coast Land Conservancy and Columbia Land Trust.

Some of this money came from the Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund, which has invested nearly \$222 million in Oregon's salmon recovery efforts since 2000. Leveraged with the Oregon state lottery dollars, a total of \$570 million have been invested in conserving and restoring salmon and steelhead habitat throughout Oregon.

In case you're new to the world of land trusts, a land trust is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to protect, conserve, and steward special lands by working with willing landowners and community partners. The goal usually includes protecting land for agriculture, wildlife, open space, clean water, clean air and more.

The land conservancy is working on several projects to conserve and restore wetlands. The Tillamook River Wetlands project is the newest opportunity. With funding from the watershed enhancement board now approved, the conservancy and partners are one step closer to being able to purchase a 73-acre property from a willing landowner and restoring it to a functional wetland for salmon and other wetland-loving species.

The land conservancy is also continuing its efforts to protect wildlife habitat in the Necanicum River watershed. Since the 1980s, the Conservancy has protected numerous properties in the estuary, and is now working its way up the river to protect wildlife habitat along the entire river corridor. The next piece of this puzzle is to conserve 100 acres of coastal wetlands and rainforest along streams in the watershed near Seaside — the so-called Shangrila Forest.

The land trust is working on a unique project to conserve 90 acres of wildlife habitat near Astoria — including three-quarters of a mile of Columbia River shoreline — not only for wildlife, but also students.

The property is next door to Clatsop Community College's Marine and Environmental Research and Training Station. The land trust plans to purchase the property and transfer it to the college. Then, Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce will work with the land trust and the college to help restore and steward the property's native plants and wildlife habitat.

Oregon's land trusts do not do this alone. They work collaboratively with watershed



Columbia Land Trust

The land trust is working to conserve 90 acres of wildlife habitat near Astoria.

councils, conservation districts, tribes, local governments, public agencies and more to conserve the abundance that still remains in Oregon.

They also do this with you — through your sustained commitment to and investment in our Oregon way of life.

And they do this with our fellow Americans and leaders in Congress, who have decided that our salmon are a national treasure worth investing in. It is through programs like the salmon recovery fund that Americans are choosing to not only prevent extinction, but to

support thriving recreational and commercial fishing industries that drive local economies in rural America. The threats facing our natural resources and our way of life will always be there — climate change, development, and invasive species, for example. But Oregonians are facing those challenges head-on through collaborative problem-solving, voluntary conservation and sustained investment.

When we invest in our lands and waters, we are investing in our economy, our children, and our health. We are investing in Oregon, and ensuring that Oregon remains a

great place to live, work, and raise a family. Thank you, Oregonians, for keeping this place great.

Katie Voelke is executive director of North Coast Land Conservancy, which has been working since 1986 to conserve and connect the landscape of the Oregon Coast from the Columbia River to northern Lincoln County. Dan Roix is conservation director for Columbia Land Trust, which conserves and cares for the lands, waters, and wildlife of the Columbia River region through sound science and strong relationships.