

OPINION



the Astorian

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GUEST COLUMN

Politics, not science behind water quality rollback

I don't know how you can be against clean water, but some of the industries in Washington state are.

They have convinced the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to roll back the water quality standards we established two years ago.

Now being implemented, these standards are among the most protective of human health in the nation. They were developed in cooperation with industry after 20 years of effort. They reflect the truth of Washington state's economic and cultural connection to water and water-based resources.

The pulp and paper industry, oil companies and others are behind the rollback, using the same old excuses that industry

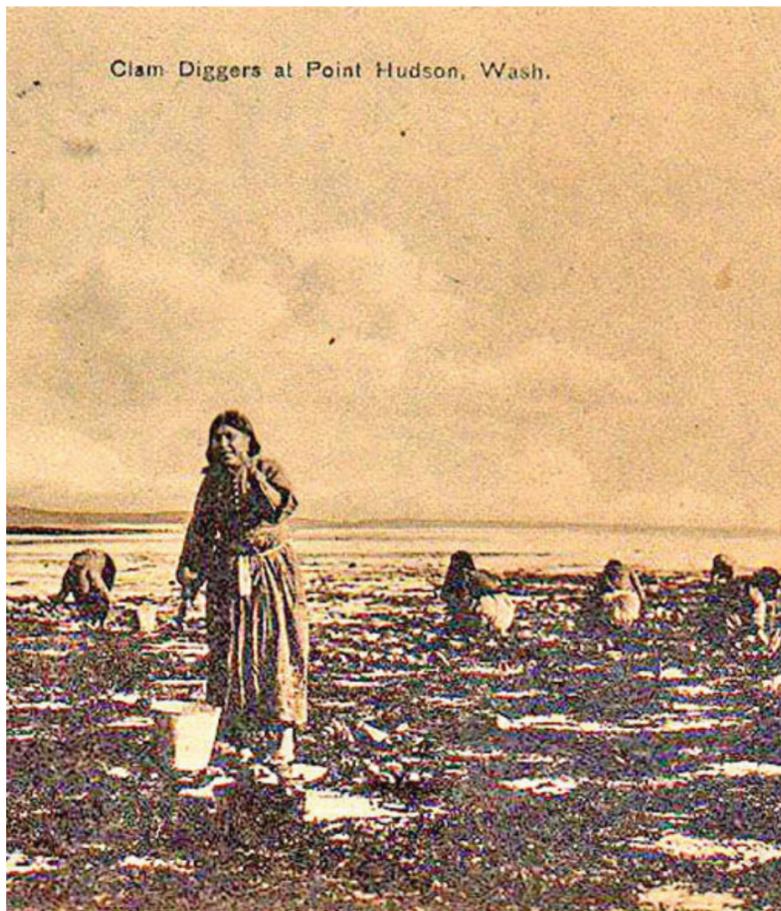
has used for decades to avoid regulation.

Automakers once claimed that air bags, unleaded gas and pollution-reducing catalytic converters — even seat belts — would spell the end of the auto industry. Too expensive, they said. The technology doesn't exist. The standards are too high and their effectiveness is questionable.

Today, the industry accepts those health and safety standards as the cost of doing business.

In fact, safety ratings now drive profits. The auto industry was forced to innovate because we had the courage and wisdom to require them to meet new standards.

When protective standards are based on good science, innovation will come. It always does. Industries were given generous implementation timelines to help foster solutions. But this water quality rollback undermines our ability to accept science, make changes and move forward together.



For centuries, Washington state's indigenous people have relied on fish and shellfish for food. A manipulation by a federal agency means some industries will be allowed a greater degree of contamination in state waters and the food species that live there.

The state's old water standards were based on a fish consumption rate of 6.5 grams per day, or about one 8-ounce serving per month, and included a cancer risk rate of one in 1 million.

The new standards are similar to Ore-

gon's. They include a consumption rate of 175 grams per day while keeping the same cancer risk rate.

Agreeing to the 175 grams per day rate was a huge compromise by the tribes, who routinely consume much

higher levels of fish and shellfish.

Industry and EPA were at the table when we developed the new standards.

What's changed? Not the science. Not the need to protect our waters and our health from toxic chemicals. The only thing that's changed is the politics of the last few years.

Equally as disturbing is the way that EPA is rescinding our standards. There was no consultation with the tribes or state before taking action. Even worse, EPA refuses to take any input from the state, tribes or public until after the rollback is complete.

Here at home, the state of Washington is providing leadership on the issue. The director of the state Department of Ecology, Maia Bellon, has repeatedly called on EPA to stand down and let the current standards be implemented.

We also are encouraged by Gov. Jay Inslee and Attorney General Bob Ferguson, who called the action illegal and vowed to take the issue to court. They point out that under the federal Clean Water Act, tribes and states are responsible for setting water quality standards under their jurisdictions.

Our water protection standards could be tied up in court for decades.

EPA and industry are motivated by short-term profits at long-term expense to our health and the health of the environment, salmon, orcas and other natural resources.

Sooner or later the bill always comes due. All of us who live here will be on the hook. We will pay for it with our health, quality of life and our natural resources.

Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission Chairwoman Lorraine Loomis writes her 'Being Frank' commentaries in honor of longtime commission Chairman Billy Frank Jr. in an effort to enhance communication between the Indian and non-Indian communities.

LETTERS

Good cause for investigation

In the June 4 letters in The Astorian, "Impeachment? Really?" and "Negative evidence," it is implied that the Mueller report documented no evidence supporting impeachment, and that the investigation was a politically motivated scam. I assume the authors have not read the report, since saying so would have reinforced their arguments.

I must admit that I haven't read it either, but I did not hear Robert Mueller say there was no evidence of wrongdoing. In fact, the investigation resulted in several indictments of Trump administration officials, and conviction of his campaign manager and personal lawyer, who testified in court that President Donald Trump lied concerning hush money to a prostitute.

Do you really expect me to believe that if Gov. Kate Brown's lawyer had admitted that under oath, that Republicans would not be howling for her removal? What Mueller said was that the Justice Department is prohibited by the Constitution from accusing the president of anything.

What would you think if our mayor, after a very close election, in which he publicly invited the governor of Washington to hack into his opponent's email, called the chief of police into a private meeting and demanded the chief's personal loyalty? Especially if the chief was a respected professional, who had been the first to report wrongdoing by the mayor's opponent.

There was good cause for an investigation. I don't really care if the House chooses to impeach or not, but as our representatives they have the perfect right, and a Constitutional duty, to make that determination.

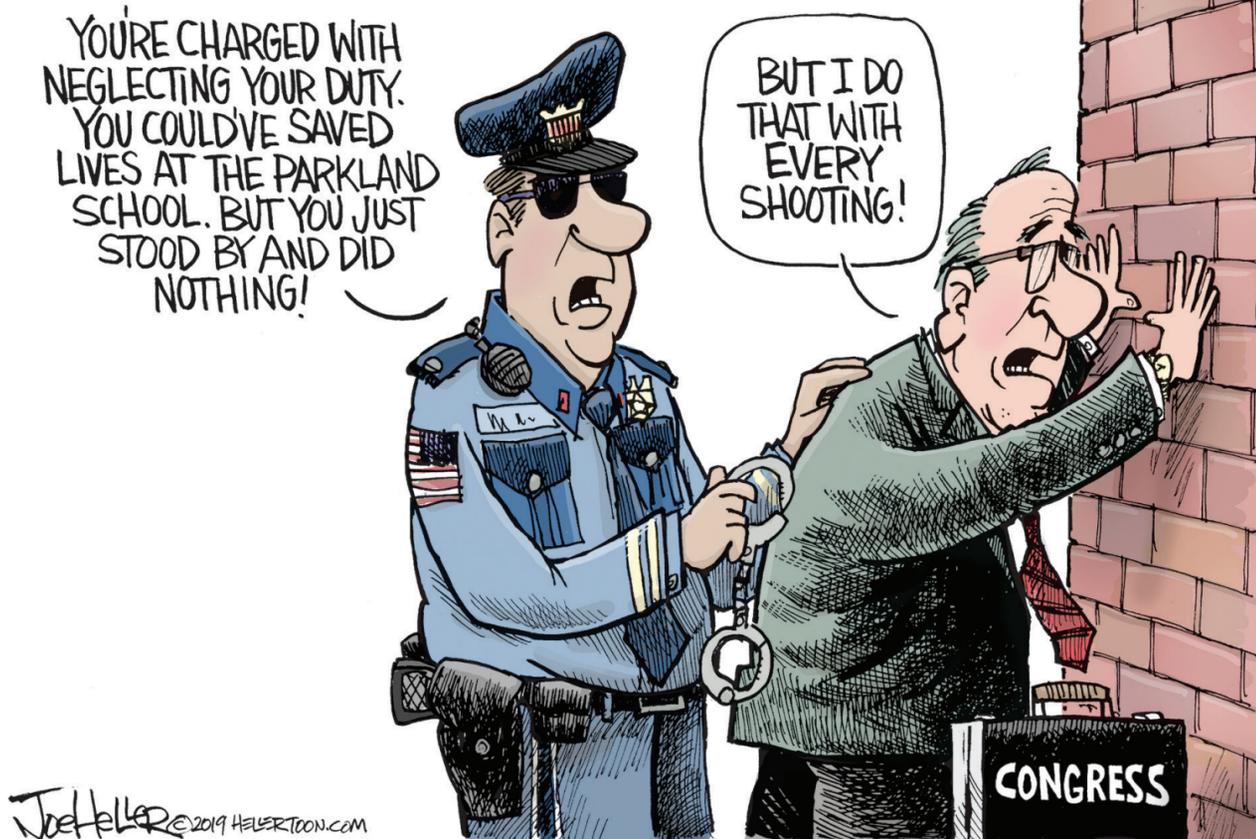
CURT YODER
Astoria

Why support Trump?

Why would any thinking American support President Donald Trump? He is giving the people who delivered terrorism to U.S. soil on Sept. 11 access to the technology used in precision bomb guidance systems. How is anyone good with this?

His supporters claim he will improve the U.S. economy, but since he took office the trade deficit has increased \$135 billion and continues to rise. Overall personal debt is up \$1.8 trillion, and rising. Average family savings are down \$5,400. Defense/war costs are up \$39 billion and rising. (Source: usdebtclock.org)

His tariff war with China has irreparably harmed U.S. farmers. Soybean exports to China fell from \$12.2 billion in 2017 to \$3.1 billion in 2018, according



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to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. China now is telling us to say goodbye to that last \$3.1 billion.

Other countries are snapping up that business, and very little of this market share will return to American farmers. What does will require significant price cuts.

American consumers pay for tariffs through price increases on a broad variety of commodities, from appliances to automobiles to the food on our plates. How does this improve our economy?

From being an admitted adulterer and sexual predator, to rolling back environmental protections, to refusing to condemn Nazis, to cozying up to dictators while offending our allies, to rejecting the overwhelming consensus of scientists worldwide on the threat of climate change, to denigrating our own intelligence agencies and law enforcement officials, the list goes on and on.

Yet, some Americans still support him. Why?

BILL GRAFFIUS
Gearhart

Thanks for support

As the school year winds down, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the faculty and staff at Seaside Heights Elementary School for supporting the

Start Making A Reader Today (SMART) reading program this past year.

It has been an honor to work with them as site coordinator. I especially want to thank my tremendous volunteers for their dedication to the program, and to the students.

As fall approaches, I encourage North Coast residents to consider volunteering and supporting this excellent program. Thanks again, to everyone.

JAN MATTHEWS
Seaside

Citizenship question

If the "citizenship question" is included on the 2020 census, mayn't I invoke my Fifth Amendment right, and refuse to answer?

If I do so, will my other responses be counted, or thrown out?

Doesn't our Constitution say "all" people in this country will be counted? Why is so much of our American life hitherto uncontested, now called into contest?

R.D. SMITH
Gearhart

Worried about our planet

We shouldn't wait to be told we cannot use plastic shopping bags in

Oregon. We should care enough about our environment to voluntarily quit using them.

We live in a throw-away world when it comes to packaged items and electronics. We need to care more about the future of our planet, or we are going to fill our oceans with plastic and make a new continent out of landfill.

As a young person I am worried about what we are doing to our planet.

TY VANDERBURG
Astoria

Help the homeless

Homelessness is becoming more and more relevant in our community. Statewide, there are 14,476 homeless people on any given night in Oregon.

The issue is spreading rapidly through the states, and with many jobs appearing and disappearing, it's apparent that there are people who are also losing their jobs due to living conditions, lack of skill and even mental disorders.

To help, people can donate, become educated and help homeless individuals by seeking out job opportunities, groups and charities, and overall helping the people who need it.

SHAUN LACKEY
Astoria