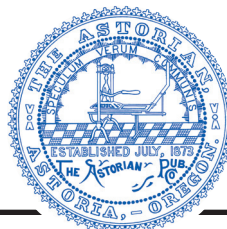


OPINION



the Astorian

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OUR VIEW

Killer whale plan goes beyond orcas

The following sentence, tucked in a footnote of a white paper the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife prepared last winter, may hold the key to the health of the southern resident population of killer whales.

“Releases of Chinook salmon from hatchery facilities in Puget Sound grew from about 50 million in 1979-82 to about 80 million in 1989 and declined from that point to less than 40 million in recent years.”

Already this year, the state Legislature has funded the release of 24 million more hatchery-raised Chinook smolts as a way to replace some of those lost to production cutbacks in recent decades.

Increasing hatchery production of Chinook salmon in the region is a logical step in addressing the concern over the health of the killer whale population, which appears to be undernourished. Providing adequate amounts of food only makes sense. Some 80% of the food the killer whales eat is Chinooks.

The killer whale population, which spends much of its time at the northern end of the busy Puget Sound in Washington state, is protected under the federal Endangered Species Act. It peaked at 98 killer whales in 1995 and now has 73, the same level it was about 30



Orcas travel off the coast of Washington state.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

years ago.

Interestingly, the peak in the killer whale population roughly parallels the peak in hatchery releases of Chinook into Puget Sound.

The goal of a Washington state task force on the killer whales is to reverse the population decline and begin to grow it.

In addition to producing more food for the killer whales, the task force notes that other steps have also been taken, including passage of federal legislation that better controls the population of protected sea lions that prey on Chinook salmon, replacing substandard culverts that Chinook use to spawn

and controlling other species of fish such as northern pike that prey on salmon.

All of which makes sense. We still maintain that adequate production of Chinook by state and tribal hatcheries is the most important step.

Unfortunately, the task force also makes a leap from fisheries management into managing the state's economy, supposedly for the benefit of killer whales. Among the ideas are reducing the state's carbon emissions to zero by the year 2050 and channeling the state's population growth in ways that result in “net ecological gain.”

Neither idea has anything to do

with killer whales or their welfare.

The task force also proposes a new Orca Recovery Office to monitor the situation. This apparently supposes that more bureaucrats will do the feeding.

The task force's goal is to increase the killer whale population by 10 during the next 10 years. This can be done, if the task force, state legislators and others keep their focus on providing enough Chinook salmon so the killer whales can thrive.

Other than making sure the killer whales are well-fed and out of harm's way, it's hard to see how any of these other steps will help in any tangible way.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Undemocratic

Please don't sign the petition to recall Rep. Tiffany Mitchell. If she is recalled, the Democratic Party will then nominate three people, and county commissioners will choose her replacement from those three.

We the people won't get to vote at all. The Democratic Party and the county commissioners will get to choose our next representative if the recall succeeds. It's a very undemocratic process, and it will cost taxpayers \$50,000 for this recall.

I don't see the point. There's an election coming up in 2020. Let's let voters choose then who our representative will be.

KATHLEEN MACDONALD
Seaside

Misplaced

I am writing to oppose the effort to recall Oregon state Rep. Tiffany Mitchell. The recall process is meant to provide a way to remove corrupt officials, not to censure someone for holding an opinion that differs from your own.

A recall election could cost our community up to \$50,000. This is money that our towns cannot afford to divert from schools, health services, or roads.

Not only that, the special election will not bring any real change. If recalled, local county commissioners — not voters — will decide who replaces Mitchell, and the rules dictate that a vacated seat must be filled by someone from the same political party.

Voters who disagree with Rep. Mitchell's policy decisions would be better served by spending their time and money recruiting a solid candidate for the upcoming election in 2020, rather than wasting taxpayer money on a misplaced recall effort.

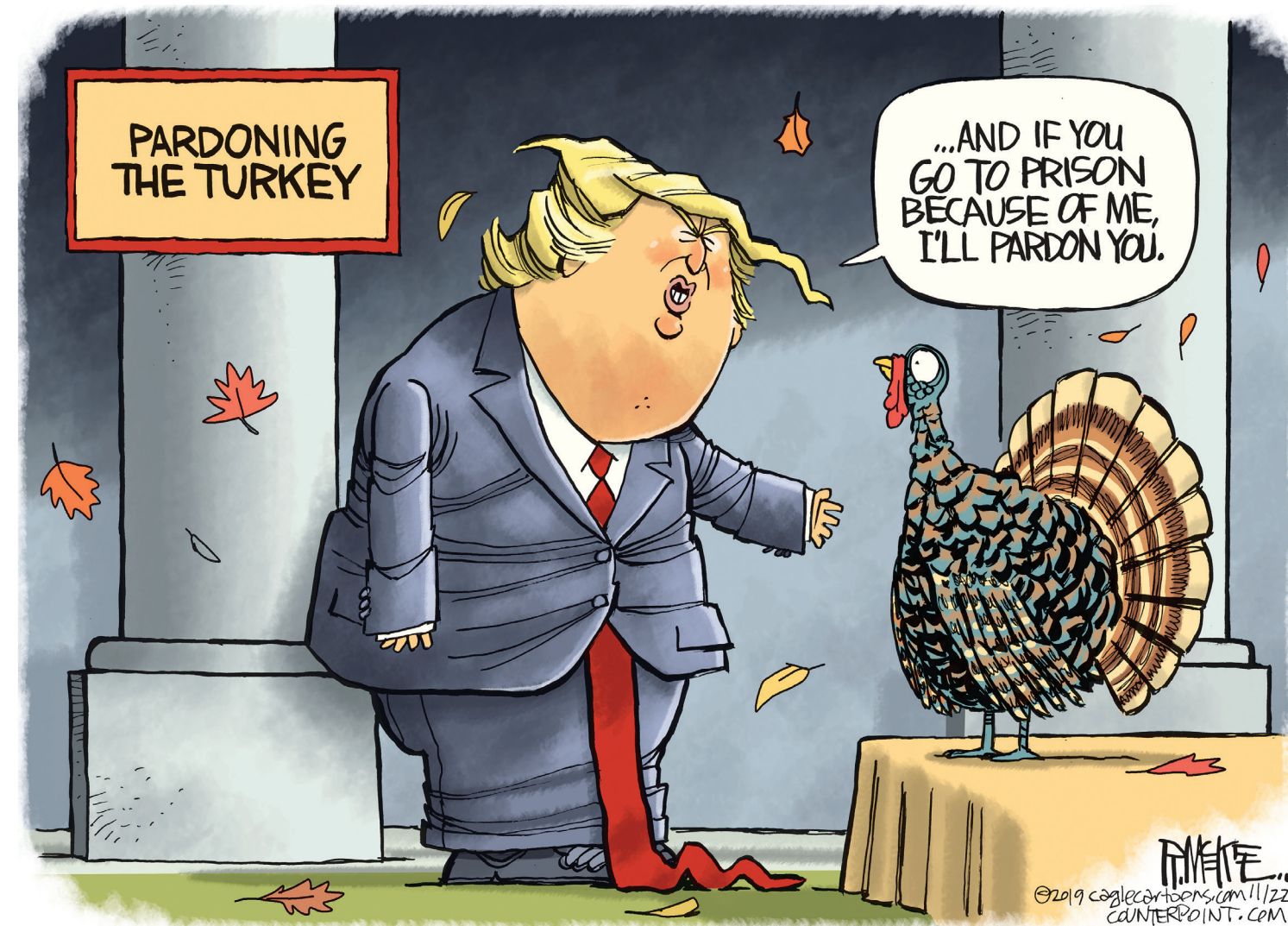
If you are approached by a petition gatherer, please decline. It's not worth the money or the hassle.

SUZANNE MYERS HAROLD
Astoria

Constructive step

I am writing in support of the proposal reported in the recent article, “Group seeks bathrooms for all in Astoria” (The Astorian, Nov. 19). This cooperative initiative among city and county agencies, local merchants and volunteers is an extremely positive and constructive step.

As the article makes very clear, the proposed public toilet facilities will serve anyone who walks downtown or along the Astoria Riverwalk. That includes not just the homeless, but also tourists and local citizens.



LETTERS WELCOME

Letters should be exclusive to The Astorian.

Letters should be fewer than 250 words and must include the writer's name, address and phone number. You will be contacted to confirm authorship.

All letters are subject to editing for space, grammar, and factual accuracy. Only two letters per writer are allowed each month.

Letters written in response to other letter writers should address the issue at hand and, rather than mention-

ing the writer by name, should refer to the headline and date the letter was published. Discourse should be civil and people should be referred to in a respectful manner. Letters in poor taste will not be printed.

Send via email to editor@dailyastorian.com, online at dailyastorian.com/submit_letters, in person at 949 Exchange St. in Astoria or 1555 North Roosevelt in Seaside, or mail to Letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR 97103.

The need to use a bathroom is universal, and the availability of clean, safe, ubiquitous facilities is a fundamental requirement of a civilized society. In fact, some people with particular medical conditions plan their lives outside their homes around the location and availability of publicly-accessible bathrooms.

Better to have them clean, safe and durable than not. Because ongoing maintenance, and occasional replacement, are key to success of this proposal, I trust that the planning process will give due and careful consideration to these aspects of the project.

Kudos to all those involved for stepping

up and proposing a sensible, cost-effective solution. It is long overdue but most enthusiastically welcome.

BARRY PLOTKIN
Astoria

Timber influence

I have deep respect for the many Oregon residents who make their livelihoods through the bounty of natural resources our state has to offer. I was born and raised in Oregon and have seen firsthand the decimation of our rural communities through the rapid decline of the tim-

ber industry.

I want to point out some facts regarding the #TimberUnity Political Action Committee, so that as a North Coast community, we might learn more about the single largest contributor to the group, Andrew Miller, of Stimson Lumber.

Miller was educated at Ivy League Columbia University in New York City, and is the CEO of Stimson Lumber, a more than \$200 million-a-year revenue-generating company headquartered in downtown Portland. Miller's family has owned Stimson Lumber, named after his great-great-grandfather, T.D. Stimson, since the 1850s.

In late May, Miller announced the lay-off of 60 employees at a mill in Forest Grove, and stated that Oregon policies were forcing him to shift operations to places like Idaho and Montana, where he says he can save 5% to 7% on production costs. Stimson Lumber closed its last Montana mill about 10 years ago.

Is Miller willing to close mills in rural Oregon communities to save 5% to 7% on cost? Would he lay off workers if he could automate their jobs?

Andrew Miller is making decisions from an office in downtown Portland, and is the single largest contributor to the #TimberUnity PAC.

ALEX CARNEY
Seaside