

OPINION



the Astorian

editor@dailyastorian.com

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KARI BORGEN
Publisher

DERRICK DePLEDGE
Editor

JOHN D. BRUIJN
Production Manager

SAMANTHA STINNETT
Circulation Manager

SARAH SILVER
Advertising Sales Manager

OUR VIEW

We must have a say in offshore wind plans

Few dispute the need to develop alternative ways to generate electricity that don't produce greenhouse gases, but our response to a proposed floating offshore wind farm in Washington state isn't a straightforward "yes."

Similar complications arise regarding floating wind turbines off the southern Oregon Coast. These prompted the Astoria City Council and the Port of Astoria Commission to recently ask the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and the Oregon Department of Energy to take their time before granting permission. Local officials want a demonstration project before grander plans are authorized, along with a full-scale environmental impact analysis.

In Washington state, the development being pursued by Seattle-based Trident Winds is generating misgivings among some users of offshore waters, who fear the wind farm located about 45 miles west of the mouths of Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor — and the cables linking it to the shore — could be one more blow to fisheries and the environment.

To put these concerns in a historical context, hydropower development in the 20th century in the Columbia River watershed came with many promises about preserving salmon runs and small-town economies. We all know how that turned out.

Far from being a vast, little-used zone, the current context of offshore development is that many industries



Associated Press

Offshore wind turbines off the coast of Virginia in 2020.

and species live in or travel through the proposed wind farm sites. As reported in The Astorian regarding the two locations west of Coos Bay and Brookings, commercial fishermen and processors have legitimate worries.

"Most fishermen, when they head out to go fishing, love to take a left turn and head south. Some of those fishing grounds that are in those two call areas are our prime fishing grounds for a number of fisheries," Lori Steele, the executive director of the West Coast Seafood Processors Association, said.

The wind farm north of the Columbia would further impinge on fishing activities already seriously constrained by the Olympic Coast Marine Sanctuary, tribal fisheries and other factors. For the coast's

diminishing number of commercial fishing folk, talk of yet another competitor for ocean space is cause for justifiable anxiety.

Astoria City Councilor Tom Hilton spoke to this concern. "I don't think we should have one of those off our coast at all," he said. "The privatization of the ocean is what we're looking at. It will definitely devastate commercial fishing."

Aside from economic considerations, it's worth noting that keystone species including blue and fin whales spend time in these Pacific Northwest waters, along with more common but no less charismatic humpback and gray whales. In the absence of an intense environmental impact study, we simply won't know what giant turbines would do to marine species large and small.

Such a study will be difficult, considering the fact that our outer waters are periodically wracked by violent cyclonic storms for months during the late fall and winter. These storms and the powerful atmospheric rivers that smash into us several times a year will require spectacular feats of engineering for at-sea structures to survive.

Weighed against all this, the Seattle Times reports the proposed Olympic Wind project would provide 2,000 megawatts of clean energy to 800,000 homes, according to Trident Winds. Construction could begin in 2028, with power generation starting in 2030. Relatively clean electricity on such a scale is a huge enticement to national politicians — including President Joe Biden — and to some in the environmental community.

Coastal communities must become fully engaged in understanding these plans. The Seattle Times reports the the Olympic Wind project in Washington and the same company's Castle Wind project in California "would dwarf anything seen elsewhere in the country."

Too often in the past, coastal concerns have been bulldozed to serve the interests of Seattle and Washington, D.C.

So yes, we understand the need for clean power. But if a big chunk of it is going to be built just out of sight on our western horizon, we deserve to have seats at the table where these decisions are being made, and a strong voice in whether they happen at all.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Show me

Betsy Johnson's campaign ads for governor are built on the refrain that "... while other politicians talked, I got things done." Catchy line, but where are these things she got done?

Show me some. And show me a Republican idea she scrunched together with a Democratic idea to make a better one.

I see a whole lot of things she voted against — things that helped poor people, working people, little people — and that she voted for, things that served the short-term economic interests of the corporations and billionaires on her list of campaign donors: Polluters of the ocean and atmosphere, big logging empires, big employers and landlords and developers.

That's who she served. Now she thinks that qualifies her to be governor?

Also, if it's illegal to text while driving, how is it OK to be recording and reciting and posing for a TV ad while driving the streets through the homeless camps in Portland?

JOSEPH WEBB
Astoria

Dystopian

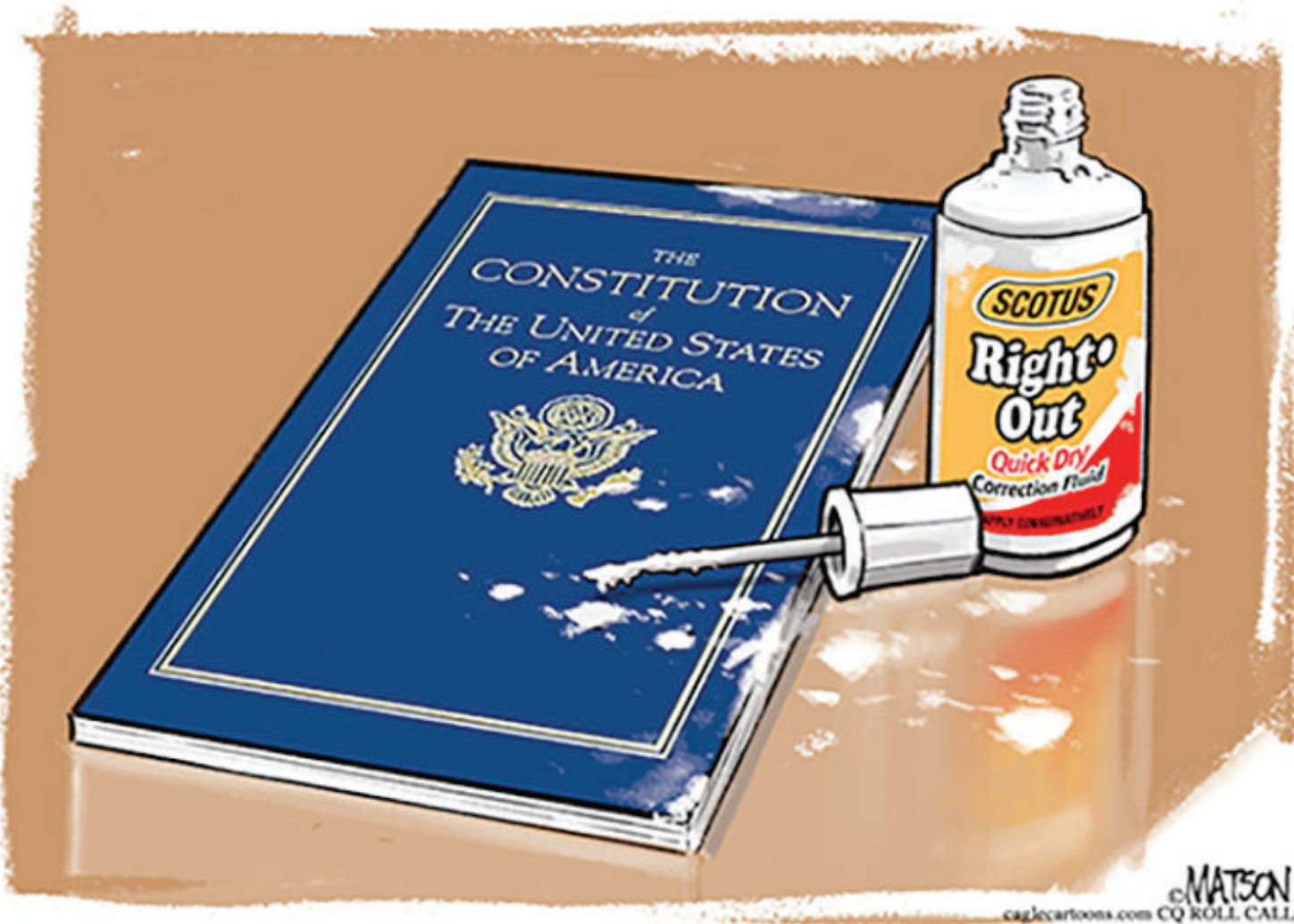
Billie O'Neel's dystopian letter ("The hordes are coming," June 21) claims the current city leadership is letting Astoria slip into the hands of the hordes who "cannot help you, but in fact, will kill you." That is strong language, with nothing to back it up.

O'Neel does not mention the tussle she's had with the city for building a deck and fence without a building permit. Part of the deck, and most of the fence, were built on city property. When the city quite rightly told her to remove the items and follow property guidelines, she appealed and lost.

All of this was reported in The Astorian last December. O'Neel vilified city employees, and claimed they harassed her. Our city employees do a good job of keeping our city orderly and attractive. The city employees don't harass anyone; they simply expect O'Neel, and others, to follow city codes as written.

To her credit, she has removed the fence, and the deck is now cut back to fit her lot and property lines.

O'Neel mentions "hordes" descending on Astoria, but which horde does she mean? The homeless, or the horde of folks buying homes in Astoria and only living



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

here part time, yet expecting Astoria to accommodate their desires instead of integrating into the community?

LLOYD BOWLER
Astoria

Sheer desperation

As the district attorney of Clatsop County for 25 years, I was called

to other letter writers should address the issue at hand and should refer to the headline and date the letter was published. Discourse should be civil. Send via email to editor@dailyastorian.com, online at bit.ly/astorianletters, in person at 949 Exchange St. in Astoria or mail to Letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR., 97103.

many things, but never lenient on criminals who used guns. The fact is that 99% of those crimes are not homicides or even assaults, but involve people who shouldn't possess guns, like convicted felons.

The one legislator I could count on, for straight talk, was Betsy Johnson. Tina Kotek is a creature of big unions and the Democratic Party apparatus gone as far left as possible; Christine Drazen is willing to pledge herself to the far-right GOP that

opposes abortion and is willing to overlook former President Donald Trump's "leadership" of their party. And then there is Betsy.

Kotek was the leader in repealing juvenile Measure 11 through 2019's Senate Bill 1008, the only law that has kept Kip Kinkel locked up these 24 years since he shot and killed 4 people and wounded 25 more.

Johnson was the only Democratic state senator to vote against SB 1008, which means that some new juvenile mass killer (like Kinkel) will never face a life sentence, and will walk out of a youth facility no later than age 26, and with no criminal record whatsoever.

What did the Democratic political leadership do after the mass shootings in Springfield, Umpqua and Clackamas? Little more than "thoughts and prayers."

By the way "thoughtful measure," has been Johnson who has stood up for victims, for real enforcement of gun crimes. The sheer desperation of Oregon's governing elites bashing Betsy's truly independent campaign speaks volumes.

JOSHUA MARQUIS
Astoria