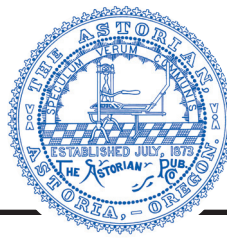


OPINION



the Astorian

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Founded in 1873

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OUR VIEW

Preserving farmland must be a priority

Mark Twain is credited with telling readers to buy land because, he warned, they aren't making more of it. Unfortunately, farmland sold too often is put to other uses and is lost forever.

A new report from the American Farmland Trust warns that the Pacific Northwest stands to lose more than half-a-million acres of farmland to urban sprawl by 2040 unless cities make smarter development choices.

Between 2000 and 2016 alone, roughly 11 million acres of farmland has been lost or fragmented by development.

Across the Northwest, as many as 527,185 acres of additional farmland may be lost to urban and low-density residential development by 2040 — particularly in rapidly growing metro areas around Puget Sound, Portland, Spokane and Boise.

Washington would be the hardest-hit state, losing 238,614 acres of farmland under the worst-case scenario. That is an area roughly 4 1/2 times the size of Seattle.

Oregon would lose up to



Houses sprout up on former farmland.

Capital Press

FARMLAND IS MORE THAN JUST A PATCH OF GROUND WITH STUFF PLANTED ON IT. ONCE PAVED OVER AND DEVELOPED, IT CANNOT BE REPLACED.

142,267 acres of farmland, while Idaho would lose up to 146,304 acres.

Reporting by the Capital Press has shown that when urban development moves into rural spaces more than farmland can be lost. As areas fall to other uses, the overall viability of the local ag infrastructure comes into jeopardy.

As fields give way to housing

development, conflicts between homeowners and farms increase. New residents don't like the dust and smells associated with farm production, complain about farm machinery on the roads and trucks during harvest time.

And, as developments break up the landscape, farmers find it ever more difficult to move equipment from field to field.

We can't fault farm families for getting the highest value for their property. Where there are buyers, there will be sellers.

As an alternative to development, we favor easement programs that allow owners to sell their development rights and realize the market value of their land while preserving it for farming.

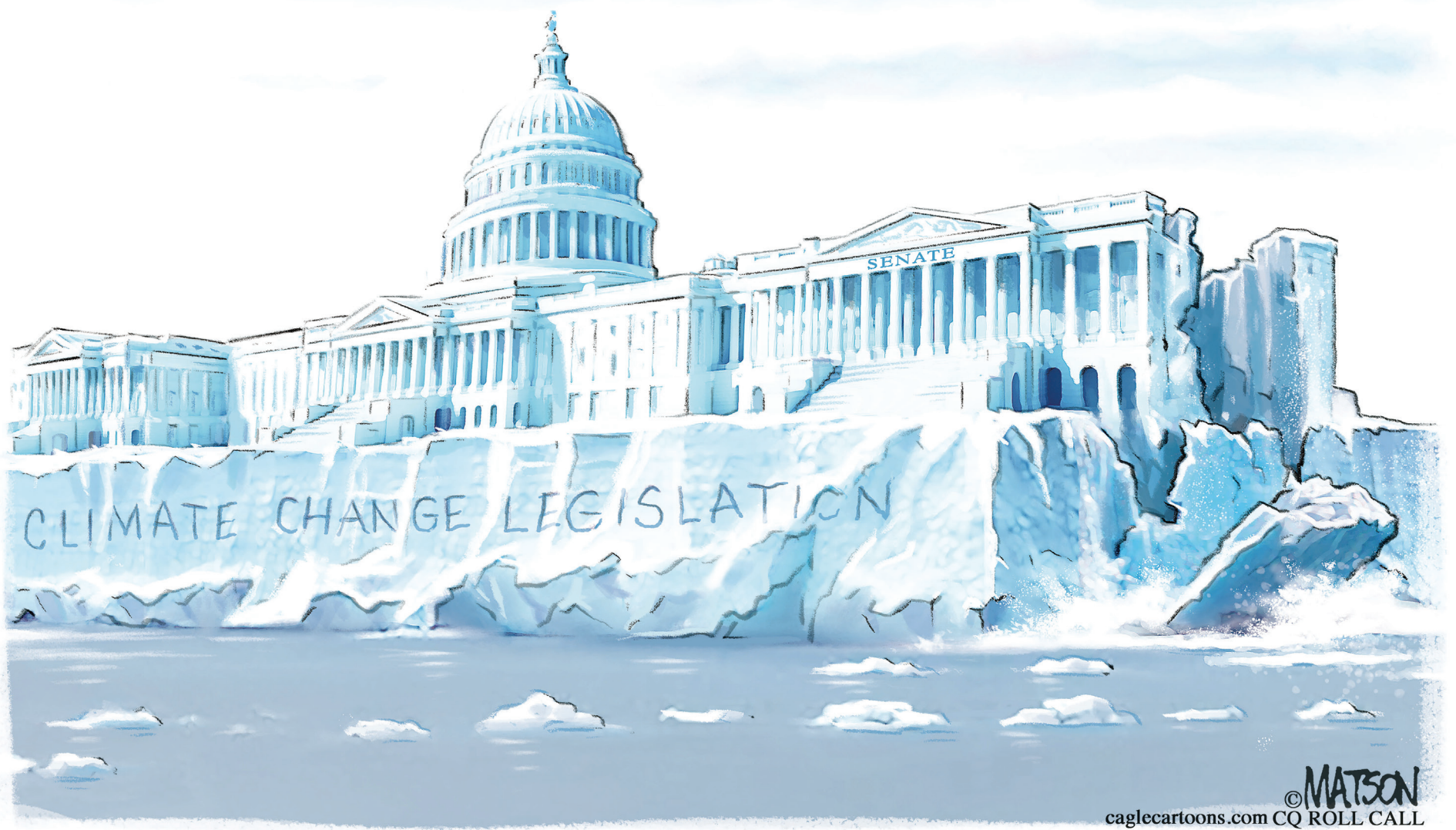
We encourage state legislatures to fund those types of programs while taking steps to rein in urban sprawl.

Preserving farmland must be a priority.

When developers look at farm and range land, they see "empty" spaces with nothing on it. They see parcels for subdivisions, apartment buildings, shopping malls and restaurants.

Farmland is far from empty. It provides the food that sustains us and the fiber that clothes us. It is a vital strategic resource. It is, as Thomas Jefferson said, the wealth of the nation.

Farmland is more than just a patch of ground with stuff planted on it. Once paved over and developed, it cannot be replaced.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Adaptability

Oregon's independent gubernatorial candidate Betsy Johnson assures the voters that she will take the best ideas from both major parties. This is not an empty promise.

She learned from former President Donald Trump to reject responsibility for her wrongdoing after rear-ending another vehicle with her car in 2013. Johnson rejects accountability. She wants the state (taxpayers) to pay for that crash, because she claims to have been on the way to the Capitol, where she was in the Legislature.

What other "best ideas" will she take from Trump?

ERHARD GROSS
Astoria

Where will they go?

The recent article (July 21) about the trailer park in Ilwaco, Washington, is an eye-opener. Elderly people who are

living there are being evicted by the new owners. Where will they go?

So much attention and money is given to the street people. We're so politically correct that they have been elevated to the "unhoused." The tourists have priority in this region. Housing is being built for low-income workers.

Assisted living is expensive, and not for everyone. The old folks worked and paid taxes. They raised families. They don't deserve to be left out in the cold.

Hopefully, someone will care enough to recognize this sad story. Please.

BERNADINE THOMAS
Warrenton

Truth and consequences

The dog ate my homework" is a fun excuse for students. After reading an article in the July 19 edition of The Astorian, I learned that Betsy Johnson, a candidate for governor, likes fanciful excuses, too.

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 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.

Instead of accepting responsibility for rear-ending a car in 2013, and causing long-term injuries to its driver, Johnson found lawyers to shield her from legal consequences of her driving.

Will anything ever be her fault if she's elected governor? Will she look for ways to avoid responsibility for her mistakes? According to that same article, Johnson believes homeless people need to show more personal responsibility. Does she listen to herself?

We're seeing too many wealthy or politically powerful people getting away with behavior that would land the rest of us in big trouble. According to the article, the injured woman says she signed an agreement not to criticize Johnson. She might need to keep silent, but I don't.

I'm appalled by Johnson's effort to avoid responsibility. She doesn't deserve my vote — or anyone else's. Oregon deserves better.

Laurie Caplan
Astoria