

Portland  
**Opinion**  
Observer

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**Letter to the Editor**

Dear Editor:  
Across the state of Oregon, there are hundreds of toxic waste sites. Ten of these are federal superfund sites. The superfund law was passed in 1980 in response to a growing concern over the number of hazardous waste sites across the country, including Love Canal. A range of serious health risks are associated with toxic chemical exposure, such as cancer, birth defects, and reproductive abnormalities. For instance, in the last thirty years breast cancer rates have doubled, while prostate cancer rates have nearly tripled. During the same periods, a corresponding increase in toxins have been released into the environment. Known carcinogens, such as dioxin, PCBs, benzene, and toluene, have been found in extremely high levels at many sites throughout Oregon. In particular, the amount of toxic chemicals found in the Willamette River justify its classification as a Superfund site. Unfortunately, two bills proposed in Congress (HR 1300 and HR 2580) would inhibit the Superfund program from cleaning up these toxic contamination's properly, shifting the costs from the polluters to innocent taxpayers. Surprisingly, Representatives Blumenauer and DeFazio are supporting one of these bills that would create an incentive for industries to disregard toxic releases into our environment. We need accountability for the multitude of toxic waste sites around the nation, not a reduction in clean up standards and an industry exemption from liability. I urge citizens to contact these representatives and let them know that we refuse to pay for these cleanups, and how important it is that polluters be more responsible for the

health of our citizens, children, and the environment.

Sincerely,  
Diana Miri  
Portland

Dear Editor  
Current scientific research in the Arctic tells us that global warming is happening and at a much faster rate than what was expected. Recent decades have seen dramatic increases in weather disasters like droughts, rainstorms, hurricanes, heat waves, and floods, consistent with scientists' predictions.

Coastal states like Oregon have shown themselves particularly vulnerable to the terrible destruction global warming may bring. Weather disasters nationwide claimed 455 lives and nearly \$25 billion in economic losses last year—the hottest year ever recorded. Many big businesses say it will cost too much to tackle global warming. The truth is we can't afford not to. This year has seen hundreds killed in heat waves, some of the worst droughts ever recorded, and record hurricane damage in North Carolina, with near record precipitation across the Pacific Northwest and parts of Oregon declared agricultural disasters.

A virtual consensus among scientists agree that global warming is real. People across the state and around the country are suffering. If we continue to fiddle while the earth burns, we can only expect more tragedy in the future. Congress needs to take action now to stop global warming.

Sincerely,  
Diana Miri  
Portland

Have something important to say, write it in a letter to the editor in The Portland Observer

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