

Portland Observer **Opinion**

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**Present Emergency Used to Enrich Corporations**

Congressman Earl Blumenauer, D-Ore. issued the following statement on H.R. 3090, the Economic Security and Recovery Act, which was debated last week on the House floor:

The economic stimulus package brought to the House floor today is an embarrassment. It is 50 percent larger than the stimulus that the President and the Treasury Secretary asked for. It is a series of tax cuts and big refund checks to corporations that will be paid for with dollars from the Social Security Trust Fund. It is not paid for over time, but adds to the federal deficit for years to come.

The Republican leadership has used the occasion of America's present economic emergency to lead a stampede toward the public trough. Ev-

A handful of America's largest corporations will receive refund checks totaling nearly \$6 billion of business taxes paid since 1986.

ery pet tax cut on lobbyists' wish lists found its way into this bill, which has nothing to do with economic stimulus but a great deal to do with unjust enrichment.

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refund checks totaling nearly \$6 billion of business taxes paid since 1986. There is absolutely no assurance that those tax dollars will be invested in job creation or other economic growth.

By contrast, the Democratic alternative provides the bulk of its tax relief to individuals and families that are likely to spend their tax savings on household needs, adding to economic activity and providing a true stimulus. It extends health care and other benefits to laid-off workers. It includes real investments in America's communities and security. Most importantly, it maintains fiscal responsibility by paying for itself over time—simply by delaying the Bush Administration tax cut for households earning over \$350,000 per year.

**Stein Demands Rate Hike Rollback**

Dear Chair Hemmingway, I strongly urge you and your fellow Public Utility Commission to take immediate steps to roll back the PGE electricity rate increase that went into effect on Oct. 1. It has become obvious how devastating the impact of this increase is for large and small Oregon businesses and potentially for seniors and low income Oregonians.

At a time when our state economy is already in a recession, this rate increase is one more nail in the coffin for many businesses. Oregonians on fixed incomes and families faced with unemployment will be particularly hard hit.

A great deal has changed since you approved the most recent PGE rate hike in late August. These changes include:

- The Sept. 11 tragedy and the dire effect of the tragedy on the national and Oregon economy;
- Recognition that Oregon is in

- the midst of a recession;
- Downsizing and plant closures by Oregon businesses already hurt by the downturn in the economy. Freightliner's Oct. 12 announcement of a plant closure involving the layoff of 381 workers is a case in point;
- A marked decrease in wholesale electricity prices, from \$600 per megawatt hour to as low as \$25 per megawatt hour.

I also urge you to review the recent rate increases granted Pacific Power and Northwest Natural Gas. Last winter Northwest Natural Gas disconnected approximately 2500 customers per month. That number is likely to be much higher this winter with the rate increases. I look forward to hearing of decisive action taken by the commission.

Sincerely,  
**Beverly Stein**  
Candidate for Governor

**Tax Gasoline in War on Terrorism**

By David Matthews

It would be completely inappropriate for me to criticize Bush and his leadership during this time of crisis if I could not offer a better solution to the terrorist threat in America. So, I have a solution: America needs to immediately implement a \$2.00 to \$3.00 per gallon "war" tax on gasoline.

Keep in mind, the terrorist Jihad on America comes directly and exclusively from the oil fields of the Middle East. In addition, this (New War) is not a 90-day war; this is the New Reality. If a \$2.00 to \$3.00 per gallon "wartax" is immediately implemented, here is what will happen and why it will defeat terrorism at the wellhead:

Gasoline consumption would dramatically decrease as businesses and consumers become more conservative in their demand for gasoline. This would cause

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

**Supporting Our American Troops**

The president of the United States and our country's commander-in-chief has deployed American soldiers, airmen, sailors and Marines into military combat against armed religious fanatics who intentionally murdered thousand of innocent civilians in New York, Washington, D.C. and Pennsylvania.

These military volunteers are America's finest young men and women. Some of them may come home seriously wounded or in flag-draped steel coffins. They are going because of their sense of duty to both their country and their individual branch of service. Most know the risks involved. They ask nothing from those of us sitting comfortably at home, nothing but our unwavering, steadfast support during the entire duration of this military campaign, for however long it takes to prevail.

Let us all remember that they are defending our individual freedoms and world democracy.

Having fought in the Vietnam War, I can vividly recall how the liberal media and public sentiment turned negative towards the war effort and unfairly stigmatized the servicemen who fought in it.

It is absolutely vital to their successful mission that once we commit our fighting men into armed military conflict that we, as Americans, show our steadfast resolve and support here at home.

War is never pretty, nor can it be fought by dropping ordnance from 25,000 feet. The military leaders who command these courageous men and women should not be hamstrung by arcane governmental functionary rules of engagement, as was often the case during Vietnam.

Let our troops find the fanatical perpetrators, kill them and come home to a proud country and its very grateful citizens.

**D. Krueger**  
Napa, Calif.

America to also go into a significant economic slowdown. The resulting economic slowdown would also cut demand for gasoline. The effect would be to dramatically reduce our need to import oil, and would force the price at the wellhead down. As a result, the primary source of funding for terrorism would be cut off at the knees. America's oil vulnerability in the Middle East would be greatly reduced. America would be much less at the mercy of Middle East "deal makers" and less likely to sell out to allies to get temporary support from hostile nations. Soon, the terrorist organizations would be defeated the same way the former Soviet Union was: it would drive them into bankruptcy. (If this isn't done, the terrorists will force America into bankruptcy.)

Our own deliberate slowing down of the economy is the best defense against this effort. Our current attempts to "grow the economy" now is exactly the wrong thing to do at this time.

America's insatiable consumption of world resources is far in excess of the rest of the world on a per capita basis. If the entire world were to consume at the rate that America does, it would collapse instantly.

Imposing a \$2.00 to \$3.00 per gallon "wartax" on gasoline would almost certainly be unpopular and result in political suicide. But, it is also the right solution, perhaps the only solution, to the Middle East terrorist threat we face today, and will face for many years to come.

Dave Matthews is the editor of *Opinion Point*, a web-based publication. He can be reached at [www.ink2.com](http://www.ink2.com).



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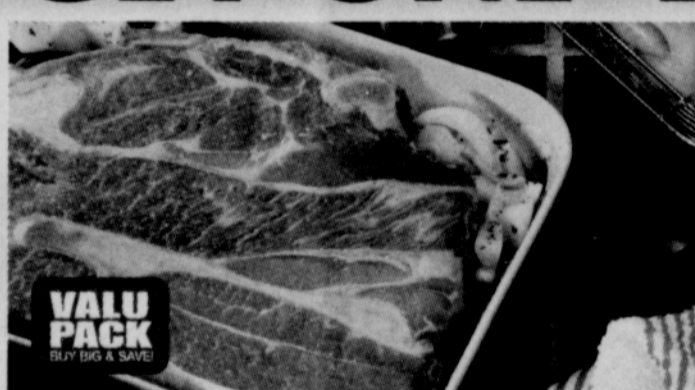
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