

OPINION

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The Portland Observer

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Reservoir Alternatives Offered

continued ▲ from Front

The often-cited EPA Long Term 2 Enhanced Surface Water Protection Rule, currently in the 90-day comment period, does not mandate the covering or burying of our reservoirs. For Portland, the new rule is all about cryptosporidium, a microscopic parasite.

For unfiltered water supplies like Portland, crypto levels are on average 10 times lower than the average level in filtered systems, but the proposed rule would require every unfiltered system to provide additional treatment, no matter how pure its source of water. This rule should be challenged.

Portland, like New York City, holds a waiver to an earlier EPA requirement to filter its source water. New York performs twice-monthly monitoring. We are certain that, if monitored, our source water would be found to have lower crypto levels than New York's. Monitoring would be cheaper than the treatment plant at Bull Run and its corollary, burial of Portland's open reservoirs.

The options to burying the reservoirs include treatment at the outlet, temporarily bypassing the reservoirs, refurbishing the existing reservoirs, and real-time monitoring.

A small treatment plant could be



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

An expensive plan for put the historic Mt. Tabor reservoirs underground is drawing fire from area residents.

built at the outlet of one or more reservoirs, sized for average daily flow. Outlet treatment includes ultraviolet light, a cheap technology that can defeat cryptosporidium, viruses and anthrax.

Other outlet treatment options include ozone and reverse osmosis, which is used by the U.S. military to purify water for troops in the field.

The city expects to spend more than \$200 million on the reservoirs proposal, including \$16.8 million to move the maintenance yard near Southeast 64th and Division and construct a new road into the park to accommodate the heavy equipment needed to demolish the old reservoirs and construct the new buried tanks.

We feel that Portland should independently evaluate alternatives to this project. Reservoir replacement as planned, will irrevocably damage significant his-

toric resources, including the cultural fabric of a major park and community.

Portland should apply for an extension to its source water treatment waiver, it should fight the arbitrary proposals to require unfiltered and uncovered systems to be treated no matter how pure their source of water is, and if the rule is not changed, consider treatment at the outlet.

Please contact the mayor, city council members, Congressman Earl Blumenauer, Senators Ron Wyden and Gordon Smith, as well as those who may fill these positions in the upcoming elections. Let them know that you want the city to pursue a more acceptable option for our reservoirs.

Floy Jones is a member of Friends of the Reservoirs. The group invites area residents to learn more on their website at friendsofreservoirs.org.

Death Warrant for Medicare Backroom deals give nod to special interests

Early Saturday morning, Democrats voted against the Republicans' Medicare prescription drug bill because it does not control the rising costs of prescription drugs, privatizes Medicare and will result in nearly three million retirees losing their existing health care coverage.

At approximately 3 a.m. Saturday, House Republicans brought their Medicare bill to the House floor. For a record three hours, Democrats won the vote by a count of 218-216, but Republicans refused to officially end the vote. Republican leaders twisted arms, made back

room deals for special interests and got several of their members to change their votes. The bill was approved by a vote of 220 to 215.

"For three hours tonight, the seniors of America won the vote on Medicare prescription drug coverage. But then this vote was stolen from us by the Republicans," House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi said. "But America's seniors will not be fooled. They know this is not the beginning of a real prescription drug benefit under Medicare. They know this is the beginning of the end of Medicare, as we know it. Democrats and seniors will not stop fighting for a defined, affordable prescription drug benefit that is guaranteed under Medicare."

"I am saddened that on an issue which both parties agreed was a top priority, we continue to remain so divided," said Rep. Elijah E. Cummings, D-Md, chair of the Congressional Black Caucus. "We had an opportunity, a golden opportunity, to deliver to America's seniors a comprehensive prescription drug benefit through Medicare. Unfortunately, what the Republicans want us to deliver to seniors is a bad bill of goods."

"I fear that the House has signed the death warrant for Medicare," said Charles B. Rangel, D-NY, ranking Democrat on the Committee on Ways and Means.

One American out of every eight is 65 years or older. In addition, more than 3.6 million African Americans are enrolled in Medicare.

The bill passed by House Republicans would take effect in 2006. It prohibits Medicare from negotiating lower drug prices and blocks reimportation of U.S. drugs from other countries at lower prices. In addition, up to 6.4 million of the

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poorest Medicare beneficiaries will get less drug coverage than they have now. Millions of seniors will see their Medicare premiums rise if they refuse to give up their doctor and join an HMO.

"The American people will see what Congress has done and they're confused," Rep. Rangel said. "They see Medicare as one of the greatest successes ever, and they are right. It has allowed seniors to live longer and better. So if it ain't broken, why are we enacting radical changes?"

More than 210 organizations opposed the bill saying that it would dismantle the program seniors have know and trusted for nearly 40 years.

Michael Deserves Due Process

BY REV. JESSE L. JACKSON SR.

The allegations of child molestation charges brought against Michael Jackson are very serious and regardless of the outcome, there will be no winners in this case.

In times such as this it is important that we allow the judicial system to take its course. This case should be tried in a court of law, not in the court of public opinion. Pundits will spin, newspapers will run banner headlines; but the bottom line is, we cannot know what really took place and speculation serves no purpose.

I am pleased that Michael and his attorney appear to be cooperating with law enforcement officials as any drama or delay only feeds the frenzy. However, already we have grave concerns about how the Santa Barbara District Attorney's Office is



handling this case.

Over the course of 12 hours, the Sheriff's Department served a search warrant on Jackson's Santa Barbara residence involving over 70 law enforcement officers - some in flak jackets - accompanied by doctors and an ambulance. This is overkill.

Furthermore, at a press conference to announce that charges would be filed, District Attorney Thomas W. Sneddon Jr. proceeded to make several jokes which were completely inappropriate. There is nothing funny about this case. Law enforcement must do their job in a manner befitting the serious allegations in this case.

In closing, Michael deserves due process; the newsrooms should remain objective and the global community must not hasten to judgment.

Rev. Jesse L. Jackson is a long time civil rights advocate and founder and president of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition.



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