

Energy



Transportation

The Portland Observer

Sustainability  SPECIAL

# Help for the Columbia

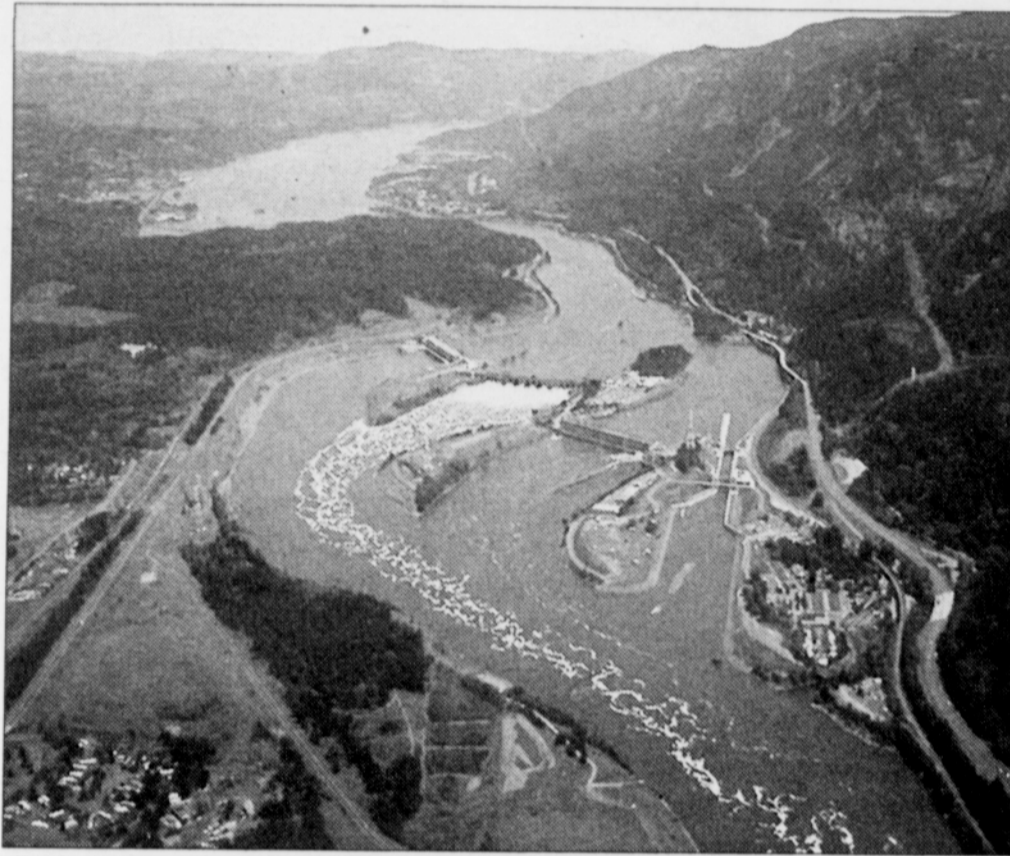
BY DREW DAKESSIAN  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The Columbia River, a symbol of the Pacific Northwest, is one of the few rivers in the U.S. that the federal government has done little to maintain. But Congress might be poised to change that.

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee last month cleared the Columbia River Restoration Act of 2010. Senators Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., Mike Crapo, R-Idaho, and Senator Max Baucus, D-Mont., authored the bill. It will authorize the Environmental Protection Agency to provide technical assistance and help state and local agencies, tribal governments, industry, landowners, and environmental groups in an effort to reduce toxic contamination in the river.

"The Columbia River has been a lifeline for Oregon's fishing industry and powers much of the Northwest,"

*continued* ▼ on page 17



The Columbia River east of Portland at Bonneville Dam.

## Renewable Jet Fuels Wanted

Local transportation and aviation leaders have launched a strategic initiative to promote aviation biofuel development in the Pacific Northwest.

The project will look at biomass options within a four-state area as possible sources for creating renewable jet fuel.

The comprehensive assessment will examine all phases of developing a sustainable biofuel industry, including biomass production and harvest, refining, transport infrastructure and actual use by airlines. It will include an analysis of potential biomass sources that are indigenous to the Pacific Northwest, including algae, agriculturally based oilseeds such as camelina, wood byproducts and others.

The project is jointly funded by Alaska Airlines, Boeing, Washington State University and the Seattle-Tacoma, Spokane and Portland International Airports.

## Plastic Bag Ban

*continued* ▲ from front

If it passes, it would go into effect in January 2012, giving opponents of the ban ample time to rally.

Adams announced his plans for the ordinance at a rally in front of City Hall last Wednesday and was joined by a crowd of supporters, including members of the Surfrider Foundation's Oregon Chapter, which has launched a "Ban the Bag" campaign.

Opponents of the ban, like Keith Christman, managing director of the American Chemistry Council's Plastics Division, called the Portland proposal a completely wrong approach.

"Banning plastic bags would cause a switch to paper bags, which have resulted in twice [the] greenhouse gas emissions, use twice as much energy to make, and produce 80 percent more waste," he said.

In 2007 when San Francisco became the first U.S. city to ban single-use plastic bags, citizens did switch to paper bags.

This does not mean that Christman would prefer that paper bags be banned instead.

"If you banned both [paper and plastic bags], you would still get rid of...the recycling infrastructure for other kinds of plastic bags and wraps," he said.

When asked if the American Chemistry Council supports reusable bags, Christman replied, "If you reuse something, you're prevent-

ing the manufacture of something else for that purpose."

Joe Gilliam, President of the Northwest Grocery Association, has a somewhat different outlook. He thinks that people should reuse bags or get a bag specifically for that purpose, and is quick to point out the torrid history of the bag ban.

"Seattle went down in flames, and that's a pretty liberal city," he said. "If we're gonna do this, we think it should be [applied to] all retailers statewide."

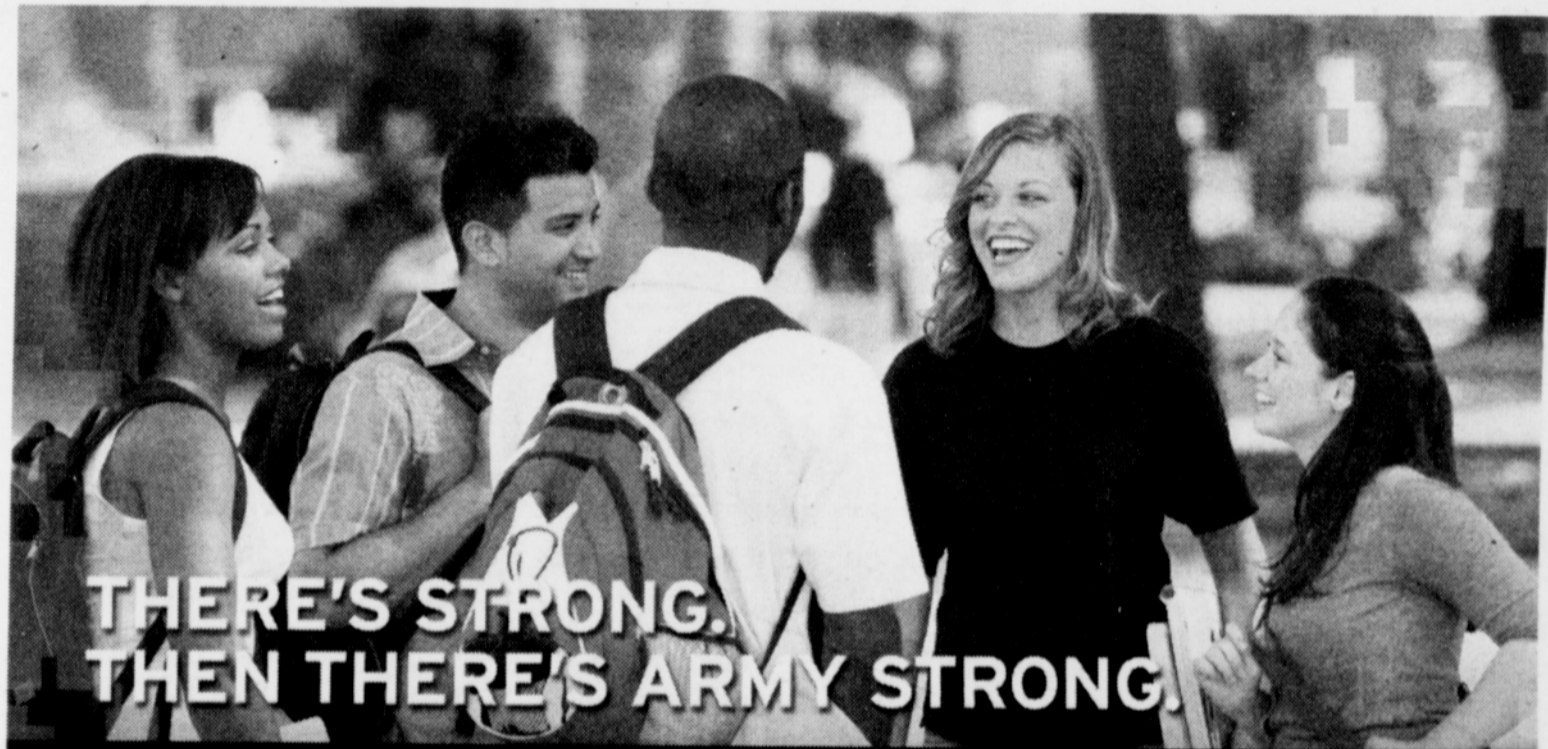
To prevent something similar happening in Portland, Gilliam said it should be applied to all retailers statewide.

"We've asked the mayor to consider setting his ordinance up in a way that allows the legislature to act next time," said Gilliam. "We think it should be done statewide, so that there's one set of rules."

Unlike the American Chemistry Council, the Northwest Grocery Association takes issue not with the concept of the bag ban, but the method of implementation.

"We've asked the mayor to consider setting his ordinance up in a way that allows the legislature to act next time," said Gilliam. "We think it should be done, statewide, so that there's one set of rules."

But Adams is charging ahead. Though a blog post from Adams' website states, "Portland and Oregon have always led the nation on smart environmental policy."



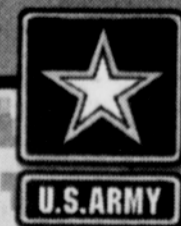
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