

**EAST OREGONIAN**  
Founded October 16, 1875

**KATHRYN B. BROWN**  
Publisher  
**JENNINE PERKINSON**  
Advertising Director

**DANIEL WATTENBURGER**  
Managing Editor  
**TIM TRAINOR**  
Opinion Page Editor

**OUR VIEW**

# Huge carbon load is coming our way

We in the Pacific Northwest have watched with some complacency in recent years as oil trains have caught fire in faraway places and ships have disgorged petroleum cargoes and fuel on previously pristine shores. Reporting by the Seattle-based Sightline Institute reminds us that we have already suffered some serious oil spills and had numerous near misses. We also face a future that includes proposals for an astonishing amount of additional oil traffic.

Summing up north Oregon and Washington schemes to export coal and natural gas, we could be transporting five times more carbon than the Keystone XL Pipeline.

- Two new oil pipelines would be capable of carrying more than 1.1 million barrels per day, enough to emit 199 million metric tons of carbon dioxide annually.
- Eleven oil-by-rail facilities at refineries or port terminals could move 858,900 barrels per day, enough to emit 132 million metric tons of carbon dioxide each year.

These fossil fuel plans win political support, even here in the environmentally conscious Northwest. Visible opposition can be dangerous: Witness Catherine Mater's summary dismissal from the Oregon Transportation Commission after she voted against a coal-

export facility. Terminals create jobs that are often union affiliated, while making oodles of money for investors. This creates a bipartisan groundswell of support in the corridors of power in Salem, Olympia and Washington, D.C.

It is questionable whether ordinary citizens get anything out of these plans, with the exception of eventual trickle-down benefits from state general funds. We certainly face more risk, both from spills and from an increasingly unpredictable climate and ocean.

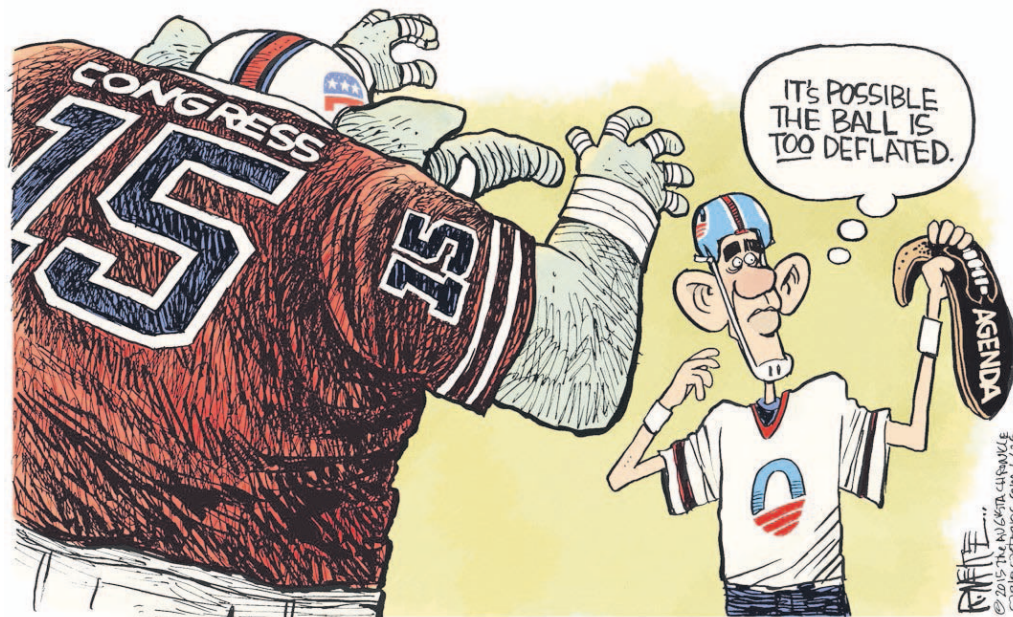
It's easy to lose track of just how often we've narrowly dodged what could have been catastrophic spills. Sightline reports an overall survey here: [tinyurl.com/pssvh23](http://tinyurl.com/pssvh23). In the past 20 years, there have been five occasions when ships or barges got into trouble in the Columbia estuary or near enough that they could have ended razor clamming, oystering and other key resource-based industries on the coast.

There are limits on what we can do to influence energy-export proposals. But at a minimum, we should be prepared to comment on them and to exert pressure on elected officials to push for maximum safety and accountability. Corporations that profit must also bear all the financial risks. They must insure that avoiding spills is their first priority and that response plans are effective and fully funded.

Summing up north Oregon and Washington schemes to export coal and natural gas, we could be transporting five times more carbon than the Keystone XL Pipeline.

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board of Publisher Kathryn Brown, Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, and Opinion Page Editor Tim Trainor. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.

**OTHER VIEWS**



GOING ON THE OFFENSIVE

## It's how you finish



TIMOTHY EGAN  
Comment

As the world contemplates the deflated football scandal in Boston — ballghazi — please allow me one last moment of undiluted sports delirium. I live in Seattle, where, at least for a while, the sky is always blue, trees are blossoming early, all children are not only above average but get into the college of their choice, free. We are a city transfixed, rhapsodically floating, after the most are-you-kidding-me experience my hometown has ever been through.

To recap: With a little more than three minutes to go in last Sunday's NFC championship game, the Seattle Seahawks were trailing Green Bay 19 to 7. At that point, according to the odds crunchers, the team had a 1 percent chance of winning — 1 percent!

The Seahawks promptly scored two touchdowns in 44 seconds. They recovered an onside kick, converted a two-point Hail Mary, won the coin toss to get the ball first in overtime, and scored to put them in the Super Bowl.

Sports metaphors crowd the language of politics, usually for the worse. John McCain's pick of an uninformed demagogue, Sarah Palin, was supposed to be a "game changer." Desperate campaigns look for a "knockout punch," or make a "swing for the fences." My favorite is President Barack Obama's description of Joe Biden's endorsement of gay marriage ahead of his boss — he "got out a little bit over his skis."

But back to the miracle finish last Sunday, and the lesson beyond pro football: It's not about the miracle, it's about the finish. Obama has been sleepwalking through the middle part of his presidency. The brutal midterm electoral crushing, with Republicans gaining their largest House majority since Herbert Hoover, slapped him from his stupor.

No longer does he care about pleasing the insiders, or playing nice with the opposition, or conforming to the expectations of a lame duck. He said it's the fourth quarter of his presidency, "and I'm going to play offense." He's decided to be Russell Wilson after throwing four interceptions.

Many have written him off. The reliably dyspeptic Charles Krauthammer said the epitaph of the Obama presidency would be: "He couldn't govern, but he sure knew how to campaign." And yes, little of what Obama proposed in his State of the Union address will find its way out of the dead zone of Congress. Just 5 percent of his 2013 proposals became law — and that was before Republicans gained the Senate.

The president's proposals "are so out of touch you have to ask if there's any point to the speech," said Reince Priebus, chairman of the Republican National Committee.

But if you look beyond capital gasbags, and consider the big ideas in Obama's speech, you can see the inevitability of his philosophy. His proposals — raising the minimum wage, paid maternity leave, making college more affordable and the tax system more fair — are popular across the political divide. They're mainstream anywhere but the fundraisers Reince Priebus presides over.

Obama has changed health care in a country that lags far behind the rest of the world in access. He's overseen an economic recovery that defied all the apocalyptic predictions of his enemies, and would be the envy of any European country — let alone one governed by Mitt Romney, who'd be taking a victory lap with the kind of numbers Obama has generated on his watch.

Consider Idaho, arguably the reddest state in the union, where Republicans control everything but a handful of latte stands. After much bluster and protest, Idaho politicians caved and set up a state health care exchange under Obamacare. To the surprise of the experts, Idahoans have embraced the private coverage available under the Affordable Care Act — "one of the most successful enrollments of any state," as Kaiser Health News reported.

Obama was in Boise on Wednesday, speaking to a crowd of more than 6,000 people at an event where all tickets were gone within an hour. "Now there are 10 black people in Idaho" was one of the tweets from Boise.

The president was fully energized, jocular, primed for a strong finish. A handful of protesters held up the usual hate posters, one comparing him to Hitler. But it did not escape notice that his motorcade passed a Shell station selling regular gasoline for \$1.77 a gallon.

To the west, in the eastern Washington district of Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, people represented by this robotically doctrinaire leader of the Republican House have signed up for Obamacare coverage at a rate far beyond the national average.

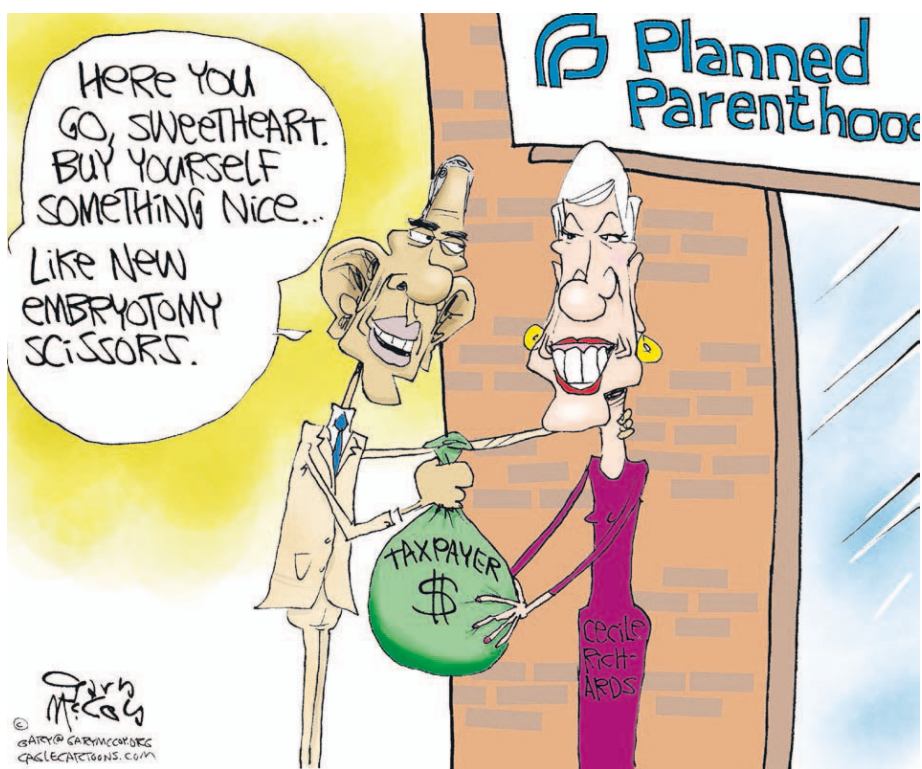
To the east, Gov. John Kasich of Ohio told a group of Montana Republicans last week that they would be crazy not to embrace the president's program of health coverage for the poor. "I gotta tell you, turning down your money back to Montana on an ideological basis, when people can lose their lives because they get no help, doesn't make a lot of sense to me," he said, in remarks reported by the *Great Falls Tribune*.

Nearly every proposal in the State of the Union address polls with majority approval, nationwide. The great issue of the early 21st century is how to elevate a stagnant middle class. When 80 people hold the same amount of wealth as 3.6 billion of the world's poorest, that equation of inequality can catch the attention of even the most heartless.

So, to the end game, in Idaho, Kansas and beyond. "It's amazing what you can bounce back from when you have to," Obama said last week. He was quoting from a Minneapolis woman, invited to the speech, but it sounded like a motto for his last two years in office.

The president is playing for a legacy. He won't get much of it this year, or even next. But eventually, if Obama's finish matches the flourish of the last two months, the United States will resemble the country he envisioned Tuesday night. Long odds make for better endings.

Timothy Egan worked for 18 years as a writer for *The New York Times*, first as the *Pacific Northwest* correspondent, then as a national enterprise reporter.



**LETTERS POLICY**

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. The newspaper reserves the right to withhold letters that address concerns about individual services and products or letters that infringe on the rights of private citizens. Submitted letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. The phone number will not be published. Unsigned letters will not be published. Send letters to Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email [editor@eastoregonian.com](mailto:editor@eastoregonian.com).

**YOUR VIEWS**

### There's more to education than preparing for a test

Very concerning to me is how my children spend their time at school.

The daily schedule is a great reflection of the amount of importance we place on standardized testing. On Mondays, aside from a 30-minute special, the children spend the entire day on language arts and math. On Tuesdays through Fridays, they have a total of 30 minutes for social studies, science, art, health, technology, etc.

The short time spent on science and social studies becomes reading. There is no time for exploration, no hands-on experimentation, no engaging of children's hearts and minds in the sheer joy of learning.

Not only are the subjects laid out by minutes, but teachers are told how to spend those minutes specifically — 10 minutes on this, 15 minutes on that, etc.

Pendleton students are not taught for the enjoyment of learning. They read to take a test; they do math to pass a test. Everything they do, everything they experience is there to help them pass a test. We have essentially made childhood into a competitive race.

There is so much riding on the test; why would a teacher feel safe teaching anything else?

What happens to the child who for whom reading is a struggle, but would make a great engineer or scientist? What happens to the future artist who isn't a good test taker? With nothing at school to interest them, they begin to hate school and want to quit. Nothing in their schooling will endow them with a sense that there is something bigger out there. They learn in order to pass a test, not to use their minds.

When the test is so important that it changes the structure of the day, it's destructive for children. Two-thirds of Pendleton students are going to fail the SBAC this year. If the test was just taken one time in their lives, and they spent enough of the school year feeling successful at other things, it probably wouldn't matter. But when a child is told year after year they are a failure, they see themselves as failures. Where is the good in that?

Together, we can let teachers get back to the art of teaching. Let's treat them like the professionals they are, with degrees, experience, and unique talents. Let's give them the flexibility to truly meet the needs of all of our children, and really do what's best for Pendleton students.

Suzanne Kennedy  
Pendleton