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OUR VIEW

Agriculture the most important use of water

When it comes to farming in the West, all you have to do is add water.

With water, the West has blossomed. Take a look at the vast Columbia Basin in Washington and the Snake River valley in southern Idaho. And the Central Valley in California.

Or all of Eastern Oregon, for that matter.

Anywhere water is available, the predominant color is green, with high-value and high-yield crops dotting the countryside. Without water, the countryside is brown or growing dryland crops with much lower yields.

For that reason, if no other, we would expect Oregon leaders to make the well-being of agriculture a top priority.

That's why a couple of recent studies should be concerning to them and anyone involved in Oregon agriculture.

A recently announced study by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has set off a debate among the region's water users, including farmers and ranchers. In it, the Corps, with help from the Oregon Water Resources Department, has decided that only 16 percent of the nearly 1.6 million acre-feet stored by 13 federal dams in the Willamette Valley would be used for irrigation. By contrast, 60 percent would be set aside for fish and wildlife.

The Corps is seeking comments on that. Here's ours: More water is needed for agriculture. A lot more. Any limit on irrigation

represents a limit on agriculture. Cropping patterns are constantly changing. As water becomes available, that means farmers can grow higher-value crops and get higher yields.

To cut off irrigation at such a paltry amount tells farmers and ranchers that they aren't a priority despite their success as stewards of the land and economic drivers for the state. It's as though the

Farmers and ranchers produce the food we all eat. Doing that requires water.

amount of water designated for agriculture was an afterthought.

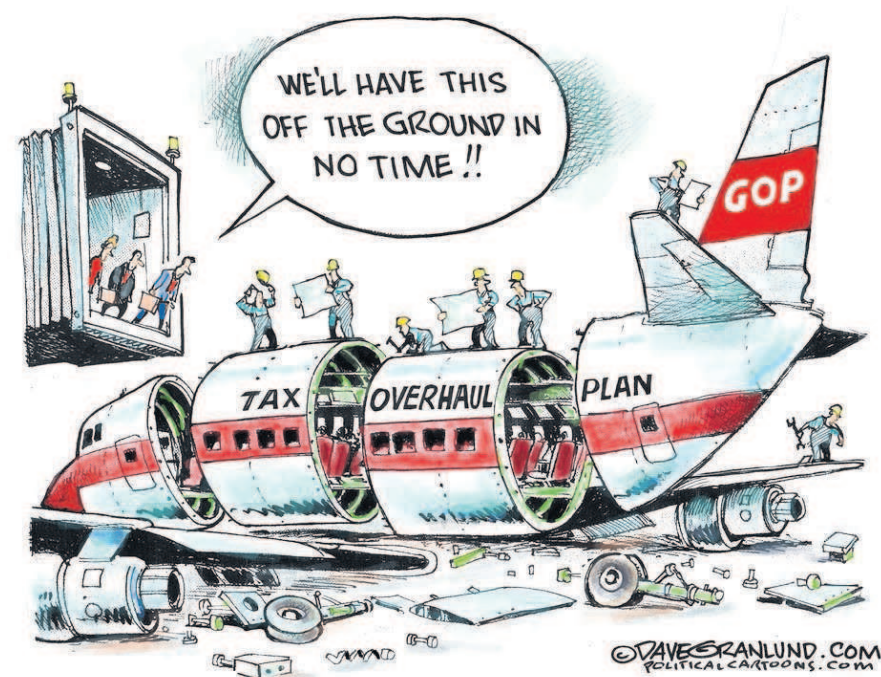
Another study, by Oregon State University, adds alarm to our reaction to the Corps and OWRD study. It predicts that by the turn

of the next century, Willamette Valley farmers will be irrigating more because of the changing climate. It also found that the lack of infrastructure — pipelines and canals — to distribute water around the valley will limit irrigation. More infrastructure can be built, but more water can't be made.

Another concern that came out of the OSU study was that the region's growing population will ultimately max out the water supplies of several cities. That means as more water goes to flushing toilets and other household uses, agriculture faces the possibility of being squeezed out.

Agriculture should not be seen as just another use of water. It should be seen as the most important use. Farmers and ranchers produce the food we all eat. Doing that requires water.

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.



Tax plan provision hurts graduate students

I am a graduate student at the University of Oregon, where I study marine invasive species. I am writing to you to draw your attention to how the House Republican tax plan (HR 1) would impact the ~145,000 graduate students across the nation.

Higher education runs on graduate student labor. We teach undergraduates and perform groundbreaking research. In exchange for 40-80 hour work weeks, we receive a modest livable stipend and tuition waiver. At the University of Oregon, this waiver keeps us from having to spend ~\$17,000 per year or, for international students, ~\$28,000. The tax bill would treat the value of our tuition waivers as taxable income, increasing our tax burden from ~\$1,500 to ~\$3,500. That increase is even more staggering at private institutions, where graduate students would see their tax burden increase upwards of \$10,000, or 400 percent.

These increases would make graduate education accessible to only the wealthiest students, disproportionately discouraging minorities from communities that are already underrepresented in academia from pursuing master's or doctoral degrees. It would also undercut our nation's ability to stay at the forefront of global academic achievement.

If this bill passes the Senate, I and many of my peers would be forced to terminate our graduate education, as the tax increase would make our income simply impossible to live on.

Zofia Knorek
Coos Bay

Roundabout safer option for dangerous intersection

I am pleased to see the concern for the danger at the Feedville/South Edwards intersection. But, I am not convinced adding stop signs on the east/west route will solve the problem. I imagine every person involved in an accident there thought there were no cars approaching that intersection when they blew the stop sign.

The lay of the land, with the adjacent plant growth, often gives the impression that there are no cars approaching. Since it is a remote area, drivers may think that no one will see them blow the stop. I am afraid adding stop signs will probably not cause the guilty drivers to change their behavior.

The solution is to construct a roundabout at this intersection. This will cause all approaching vehicles to slow down to move through the roundabout. Problem solved. Scientific evidence and my experience has shown me that traffic does move more safely



OTHER VIEWS

Is it time for Umatilla County to study Mandarin?

China and Asia are big business for Oregon. In addition to agricultural exports, Nike and Intel have a major stake in China. Intel, Oregon's largest private employer, has a plant in Chengdu. Umatilla County and the entire American economy need to keep their export and import trade eye on political and economic developments in China.

China has just finished its every five year national Congress. As expected, Xi Jinping had been elected to a second five year term. Also as expected, the Congress confirmed Xi's growing centralization of power by approving appointments of the Xi team to key position in the government. He has been elevated to the position of Chairman and his thinking is now embedded in the Chinese constitution as "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese

Characteristics for a New Era." Only Mao Zedong had his "thought" enshrined in the constitution. Even Deng Xiaoping was only recognized in the constitution for his theory. Xi had already been pushing for a revival of teaching Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong thought. Now speeches, textbooks, publications and university curricula will be infused with Xi's thought.

In his report to the Congress, Xi moved away from an early emphasis on market reform. Instead he spoke about a new era, an era marked by China moving onto the stage of global prominence and leadership. In his first term, he had spoken about the China Dream, not a Chinese version of the American Dream of individual attainment but a dream of greatness for China.

He has set ambitious goals for China: eliminating poverty and becoming a genuinely prosperous nation. In his "Made in China 2025," Xi is intent on making China into an innovative power marked by leadership in ten high-tech industries. In the place of low value added exports or the assembly work where much of the value goes to the developed world, he sees a China that will master the high value added parts that drive everything from robots to aerospace.

Information technology and semiconductors that are central to almost every electronic device are very much targets for Chinese growth. Combining private investment and government support, reports suggest that China will dedicate as much as \$150 billion to dominate the coming generations of semiconductors, a field developed and long dominated by the United



KENT HUGHES
Comment

States.

The dominance, however, may not last. Not only semiconductors, but the entire supply chain that makes semiconductors possible is steadily moving to Asia with much of it going to China.

In the 1970s and 1980s, America faced another major competitive challenge that came to be known as the East Asian Miracle. In place of relying on private companies to compete in global markets, Japan and number of other East Asian countries set clear industrial priorities, provided subsidies for their companies, kept their currencies undervalued to give their exports an edge in international markets, acquired intellectual property by many means and protected their key industries from import competition.

With China emerging as an economic, innovation, and military rival, the United States may need to rethink its tradition of letting the market dictate results.

China has adopted many of the elements of the East Asian Miracle while also relying on their thousands of state-owned enterprises, and effectively using the leverage of its large market to persuade American companies to share their key technologies with Chinese partners. China and America are playing by very different rules. With China emerging as an economic, innovation, and military rival, the United States may need to rethink its tradition of letting the market dictate results.

America still has many strengths: world class universities, a leadership in many key technologies and an entrepreneurial culture.

America beat the Great Depression, won World War II, and prevailed in the Cold War. America responded to the 1980s challenge of Germany and Japan with its leading companies, creative universities and an innovative government.

In 1957, the Soviet Union beat America into space by launching the satellite Sputnik. It was a threat to America's security and a blow to America's pride. We responded by putting a man on the moon.

Pendleton and Umatilla County were always part of America rising to meet the challenge. If you take a look at the 1958 Pendleton Senior High yearbook, you will find the picture of the math club. The caption refers to Sputnik and notes that "PHS has its share of outstanding math students." It is time for America, like 1958 Pendleton, to prepare for the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Kent Hughes is a public policy fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D.C. He is a 1958 graduate of Pendleton High School.

YOUR VIEWS

and more rapidly under these conditions.

Once the county has this problem solved, they can work on ODOT to get the trucks off the Diagonal/Elm Street route before someone else is killed.

Carlisle Harrison
Hermiston

Stop sign isn't the answer

Congratulations to all of the people who got their 4-way stop sign at the intersection of Feedville and South Edwards roads. Surely when an accident occurs at Feedville and Canal Road you can get another one there. Maybe Umatilla Road Department with no budget can put up 4-way stop signs at every intersection and stop grading and chip sealing roads.

The only thing wrong with the intersection at Feedville and South Edwards roads is that over half of the people are texting and driving, especially the young

people; when they get to the stop sign, most stop, get done with their text messages, then go through the stop sign without even looking. I'm sure this has caused the accidents as frequently as "blowing" the stop signs.

I should know something about this intersection. I worked for the Umatilla County Road Department for 23 1/2 years, live on East Loop Road in Hermiston, and went through that intersection at least twice a day to get back and forth to my job in Pendleton.

Are we really to the point where we are going to slow commercial (farm) traffic down on Feedville Road to the point where it creates an economic loss to not only them but to all of us in the long run because some parents won't stop their teens from texting and driving or no enforcement of the no texting law is happening? I sure hope not.

Gary Roberts
Hermiston

LETTERS POLICY

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