

# O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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## OUR VIEW

# Environment vs. economy

Oregon's environment and economy are in a political battle.

The saving grace may be a new legislative committee, which House Speaker Tina Kotek and Senate President Peter Courtney are forming to find a solution.

The issue is legislation dubbed "Clean Energy Jobs" by its supporters and derided as "Tax and Job Loss" by its opponents. It is a long-studied and highly complex plan to reduce greenhouse gases from Oregon's very largest polluters, put a price on carbon emissions and invest the proceeds in clean energy projects.

The controversy exemplifies Oregon's urban-rural divide. Environmental groups and Democratic legislators, especially in the Portland and Eugene areas, enthusiastically support the legislation and wanted it approved in the 2018 Legislature. Republican lawmakers and major business groups generally oppose the plan, saying it will be expensive for corporations, drive up costs for consumers and have minimal effects on global greenhouse gases.

In what might be a stroke of political genius, Kotek recently asked Courtney to join her in creating and co-chairing a



AP Photo/Branden Camp, File

**The Trump administration is doing away with a decades-old air emissions policy opposed by fossil fuel companies, a move that environmental groups say will result in more pollution. The Environmental Protection Agency issued notice Thursday it is withdrawing the "once-in always-in" policy under the Clean Air Act, which dictated how major sources of hazardous air pollutants are regulated.**

legislative "special Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction to continue the efforts to cut statewide carbon emissions and grow Oregon's clean energy economy." The goal is to rework the current legislation for the 2019 Legislature.

The Oregon Legislature has achieved some success through its use of joint Senate-House committees. Courtney and Kotek recently formed the Joint Committee on Student Success, which was scheduled to launch its statewide

public hearings this week. Its members include Rep. Greg Smith, R-Heppner. That committee is modeled after last year's successful transportation-finance committee, which also included Smith.

Kotek, a liberal Democrat from Portland, is a keen backer of Clean Energy Jobs. Courtney, a Salem Democrat who is too moderate for some members of his party, helped block passage of the legislation this year, saying it was not ready.

Courtney said he hopes the joint committee can craft a bill that is both effective and has widespread support not only among Democratic and Republican legislators but also from environmental, business, transportation and other groups.

The legislative leaders could start that process by giving full representation to urban and rural Oregon. They should appoint equal numbers of Democrats and Republicans to the Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction.

As Courtney said in announcing the committee with Kotek: "Urban or rural, Democrat or Republican, we share the same state, same air, same environment and the same planet. It's time human nature starts taking care of Mother Nature."

## YOUR VIEWS

### Democratic dogs sniff out trouble

We have a dog that believes in democracy. She is such a strong proponent that she roams the countryside to make sure every kind of animal and bird and critter take part equally. She even includes coyotes and magpies in her peculiar republic. She wants each one to have a vote, I would guess, on the frequency of blue moons, or when Spring should actually begin, or about cattle and open range.

She has paid for acting on this belief that democracy must work locally. In her concern that all vote she met, once, a foul-smelling black and white beast that inflicted olfactory damage, then stalked her all the way home. We got in on that one. In her eagerness that every one deserving of rights should take on responsibility for it, she ran into an old school critter that peppered her hide with quills. We got in on that, too. More than once hawks have pursued her, diving and loudly demeaning her efforts and ancestry.

Some want to be left alone, I tell her, and some have power they don't want challenged, while most admire your work, but from a pain-free, uninvolved distance.

I tell her stuff like that. I give her a

dog biscuit. She seems to understand. But, if she's the only one interested then democracy may be going to the dogs.

Don Reese  
Echo

### Vote Carole Innes for Pendleton city council

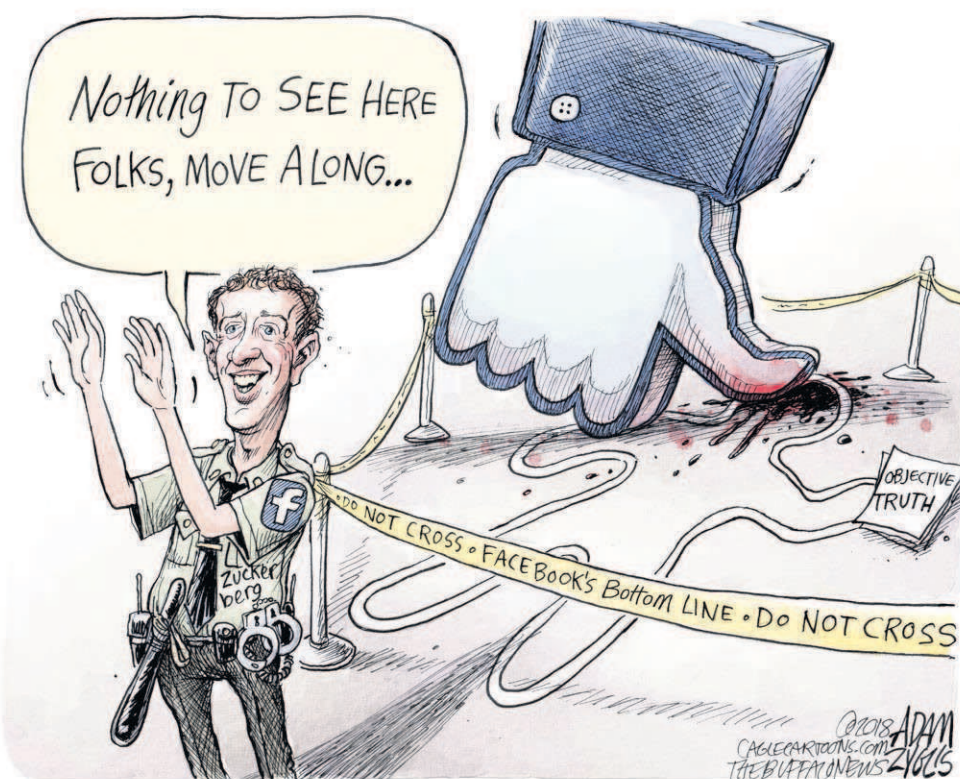
A vote for Carole Innes is a vote for a better Pendleton.

Carole, a Pendleton resident for over fifty years, will give the council a positive presence in many ways. A long career in finance will serve as a great asset in understanding and maintaining budgetary transparency. Her involvement with groups and boards such as Altrusa, Umatilla County Planning Commission, College Community Theater, Mental Health Advisory Committee, Behavioral Health Board and as president of the BMCC Foundation Board make her eminently qualified for a position on the city council.

Carole understands that Pendleton's greatest asset is its people, and she will work hard for the betterment of the entire community.

Support Carole Innes for city council.

Bruce Gianotti  
Pendleton



## OTHER VIEWS

# If Flynn and Manafort don't face collusion charges, then who will?

Trump-Russia special counsel Robert Mueller is authorized to investigate "any links and/or coordination between the Russian government and individuals associated with the campaign of President Donald Trump." The popular word for that is "collusion," and it remains at the heart of both the Mueller and the Senate Intelligence Committee investigations. (Majority Republicans on the House Intelligence Committee recently announced they were unable to find evidence proving collusion.)

While much about the Mueller investigation remains unknown, we do know the indictments he has filed and the pleas he has reached with various figures in the case. There are some — including charges against Russia's Internet Research Agency, several individual Russians and two minor figures — that target either people on the Russian side of the equation or those for whom there are no suspicions of collusion.

But Mueller has charged three people who were in the Trump campaign inner circle — former national security adviser Michael Flynn, former campaign chairman Paul Manafort and former deputy campaign chairman Richard Gates — all with ties to Russia and all of whom might be expected to be part of a collusion scheme, had one existed. Mueller has also charged one peripheral hanger-on, George Papadopoulos,

who might conceivably have been part of a collusion scenario.

But all have faced charges and none of those charges, at least so far, has involved allegations that Flynn, Manafort, Gates or Papadopoulos played a role in a scheme of collusion, or coordination, or conspiracy, or whatever it is called. And that could tell the public something about the state of the collusion allegation inside the Mueller investigation.

To put it briefly: What kind of collusion scheme between Russia and the Trump campaign could have existed without Michael Flynn being part of it? What kind of collusion scheme could have existed without Manafort? And Gates? And yet none of them — nor Papadopoulos, either — has been charged with taking part in a collusion scheme.

Flynn pleaded guilty to one count of lying to investigators about what he discussed in a phone conversation with Russian ambassador Sergey Kislyak. (Investigators have always known what the two men talked about, since the call was wiretapped, recorded and transcribed.)

Manafort has been charged with a daunting number of financial crimes, including fraud and tax evasion, relating to his work for a pro-Russian political party in Ukraine.

Gates was charged with most of the crimes Manafort faced, but received a deal

from Mueller, allowing him to plead guilty to one count of lying to investigators and one count of hiding profits from his work with Manafort in Ukraine.

Both Gates and Manafort were charged with something called "conspiracy against the United States." As the former prosecutor Andrew McCarthy points out, "there is no such offense in federal law as 'conspiracy against the United States.'" But Mueller's office described their alleged crimes that way, and some media commentators liked the treason-ish sound of the phrase.

Papadopoulos pleaded guilty to one count of lying to investigators about a conversation he had with a Russian who wanted to create ties with the Trump campaign.

All those charges, and none alleging that any of these men, some of them at the highest levels of the Trump campaign, took part in any collusion, or coordination, or conspiracy between the campaign and Russia.

"I can't imagine that there would have been collusion or conspiracy with the Russians that Michael Flynn didn't know about," said Sol Wisenberg, a former prosecutor with the office of independent counsel Kenneth Starr. "If you're trying to make a collusion case and you are Mueller, you're trying to get someone to plead to the crime you're trying to prove."

McCarthy has written much the same. "When a prosecutor has a cooperator who was an accomplice in a major criminal

scheme, the cooperator is made to plead guilty to the scheme," he wrote last December. "This is critical because it proves the existence of the scheme."

But in the Mueller investigation, it is precisely the people who would most be expected to be part of a collusion scheme who have not been charged with taking part in any such activity.

Nevertheless, for those hoping for collusion, there are still some possibilities. Mueller might lodge, or might have already lodged, additional charges against Flynn, Manafort or Gates.

And there is still Carter Page, like Papadopoulos a sometime volunteer Trump adviser, who traveled to Russia in 2016. Page has been publicly vague about his dealings with Mueller but said recently that he has been interrogated for more than 30 hours in the last year by the executive and legislative branches of government. Perhaps Mueller is waiting to charge him with something. Or maybe someone else will be charged with taking part in the long-sought collusion.

Still, it's hard to imagine a collusion plot that never touched Flynn, Manafort or Gates. Maybe it happened, but after more than 18 months of FBI, and now Mueller, investigations, it's becoming harder to see how.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for *The Washington Examiner*.

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