

OPINION

VOICE of the CHIEFTAIN

Oregon cap and trade plan coming to a vote

Oregon's Environmental Quality Commission is scheduled to vote on Dec. 16 on new rules that will give Oregon a version of cap-and-trade climate action.

The goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A state summary of the plan runs 364 pages. Basically the proposal is to set an enforceable "declining limit, or cap, on greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels used throughout Oregon, including diesel, gasoline, natural gas and propane used in transportation, residential, commercial and industrial settings."

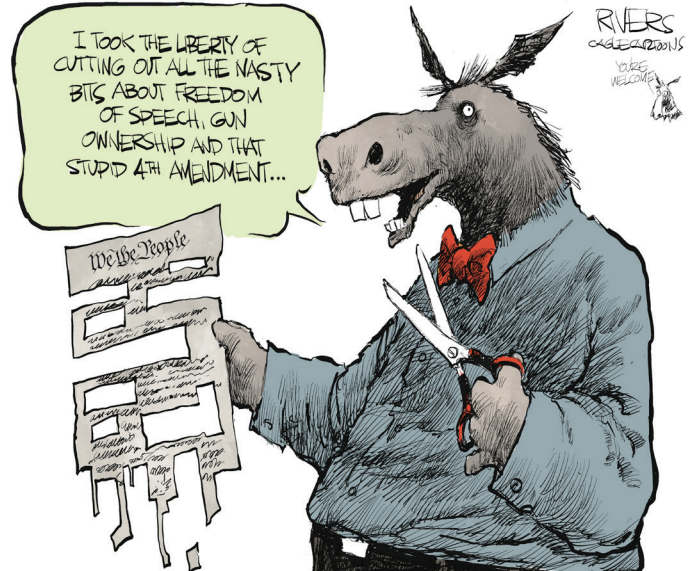
What will that mean to you?

It means Oregon moves away more swiftly from fossil fuels and toward more renewable sources of energy and toward cleaner air. The hope is that it would benefit the state and the planet as a whole. There will likely be new green jobs created. Consumers may end up saving money if they switch to electric vehicles. Some electric heat pumps are much more efficient than the gas furnace consumers may have in their homes now. It is hoped that investments in low-income and minority communities will help protect them from cost increases or maybe even save them money.

But there will be costs. An analysis prepared for the state suggests due to adoption of this plan there might be an increase in price per gallon of gas of between 10 cents to 36 cents between 2025 and 2050. Diesel fuel might face similar increases. Natural gas will likely see the biggest price bump, perhaps doubling the cost by 2050 compared to a price in 2022. Electricity costs may also increase.

The impacts will likely go far beyond direct energy costs to consumers. The Oregon Business and Industry Association pointed out consumers will get energy cost increases passed along to them for other goods. Old ways of doing business will be disrupted. Some businesses may leave the state or contract. Jobs may be lost, as well, particularly in the natural gas industry.

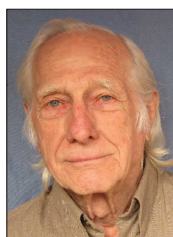
When big changes are made in Oregon, they usually come through the Legislature or through ballot measures. This is coming through executive action and rule making. That seems like the only way Oregon was going to move forward on such a plan, but it's hard to argue it is the best way to maximize public input into it.



Where have all the Republicans gone?

OTHER VIEWS

George Mead



I am a progressive Republican, a rare breed, one who "favors or advocates progress, change, improvement, or reform, as opposed to wishing to maintain things as they are."

This harkens back to Teddy Roosevelt. Albert Quie, former governor of Minnesota, Jan. 4, 1979, to Jan. 3, 1983, and member of the Congress House of Representatives, Feb. 18, 1958, to Jan. 3, 1979, said: "We are willing to let the federal government assume primary responsibility for defense and other priorities for which states are not equipped. The problem in the last 15 years or so is that well-meaning federal officials have not recognized the distinction between 'federal' and 'national.' They have often forgotten that education is a partnership."

The rub, of course, is that more and more federal involvement comes by way of mandates without the dollars to comply. Or, dollars are provided with so many strings attached that unique state and local circumstances get ignored. Laws and regulations are written to apply to a mythical "average" state.

The Declaration of Independence states: "We hold these truths to be self-ev-

ident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

The Constitution of the United States says: "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

Where have all the Republicans gone? They certainly do not appear to be interested in almost all the things the two documents state. Listening to the Republican career politicians speaking in all manner of venues, I haven't heard comments from them about "domestic tranquility" or "the general welfare." I have seen the equivalent of plastic bobblehead dolls nodding violently to their quasi-deity as if that matters. Nothing they are anxious about, or advocate, seem to have anything to do with forming a "more perfect union" or "establishing justice."

Public schooling started very early in colonial times by the citizens. This was then followed by the states, counties, cities and towns long before any politician sitting around in Washington, D.C., decided they knew better than those folk what primary education ought to be.

Somehow, the folk in Washington, D.C., felt they knew more about creating public schooling than all the folk in the original colonies, the states, counties, towns and cities who did that. Instead, the public school systems had to be homogenized like the milk we currently buy, instead of letting the cream float to the top.

At the same time all the aspects of higher education were created by the same folk outside of Washington, D.C. The total of institutions created are 1,714 — trade schools to doctorate universities.

Unfortunately the private and public institutions have allowed greed to overwhelm their good sense as they accepted massive amounts of Pell grants and jacked up their tuition because of the massive inflow of dollars. The program was planned as a feel-good program with no strings attached vis a vis the cost of tuition. The usual lack of not asking what the unintended results might bring became the ever higher costs for education. Congress is still willing to add ever increasing dollars into the program with the same lack of planning. Where have all the Republicans gone?

It would appear that the national party is more interested in the creation of zombie-politicians, infected by the T-virus, who wander about moaning and groaning rather than addressing those actions stated in either the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution.

George Mead, a retired anthropologist, lives in La Grande.

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