

OPINION

OTHER VIEWS

Private enterprise shines in climate efforts

Not to be critical of government, but if you want something done, you're usually best off looking to private enterprise.

It's not that government can't do it, it's just that government too often gets in the way of itself — and everyone else.

Take, for example, efforts to slow climate change. At the state and federal levels, a hodgepodge of climate programs has emerged over the years. Most are aimed at jacking up oil and gas prices.

By doing that, they are supercharging inflation, which is now 7.9%, the highest it's been since 1982.

The federal government has been particularly inept in its climate efforts. It has subsidized "green" companies such as Tesla, which in turn has built factories overseas, including China, the biggest climate polluter on the planet. That country produces 30% of the world's carbon dioxide and continues to add to its fleet of 1,110 coal-fired power generation plants to run all of those Chinese-built Teslas.

By comparison, India operates the second-largest number of coal-fired plants, 285.

In the meantime, the federal government has also discouraged domestic oil and natural gas production while going to countries such as Venezuela, Iran and Saudi Arabia looking for more oil.

In Oregon, the unelected bureaucrats in the Department of Environment Quality are doing an end-run around the Legislature with their "Climate Protection Program."

In Washington, the Department of Ecology is aiming at forcing refineries to reduce their greenhouse gases by 28% in four years.

That means consumers and businesses — you — will ultimately be saddled with higher gasoline and diesel prices.

The carbon footprints of Oregon and Washington are minuscule compared to those of China, India and Russia, or even California. What we in the Northwest do to slow climate change matters, but not very much. Washington produces about 0.19% of global carbon emissions, while Oregon produces about 0.17%. That's according to each state and the Our World in Data website.

With that in mind, we were greatly interested in a new private enterprise effort that appears to have all of the trappings of success. Organic Valley, a cooperative of organic dairy farmers, last month announced its Carbon Insetting Program as a means of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

This program is the essence of simplicity. Instead setting up some confusing government-style effort that requires a battalion of new employees, Organic Valley will pay co-op members for reducing their carbon footprint. More efficient lighting and coolers, installing solar panels, planting trees and better manure management are among the activities that will reduce or offset carbon dioxide and methane production.

The efforts will be certified by a third party, SustainCERT, to determine the impacts.

In return, the farmers will receive the market rate, about \$15, for every metric ton of carbon that is either sequestered or otherwise prevented from entering the atmosphere.

Others in agriculture are developing efforts that will similarly reduce their impact on the climate.

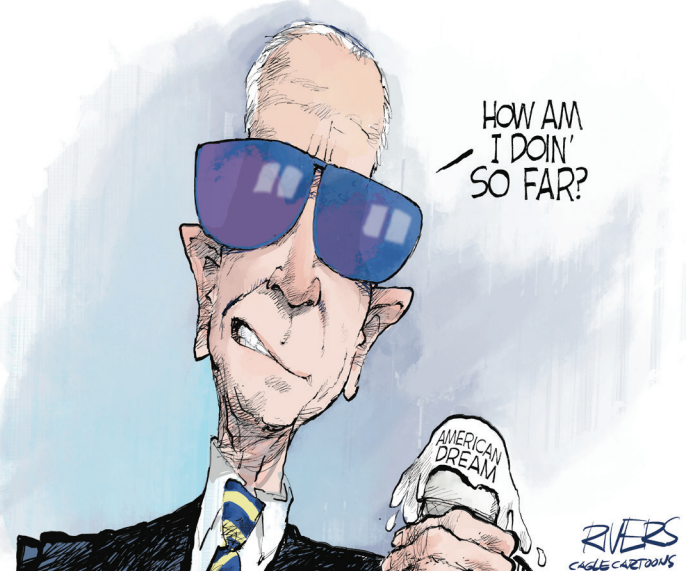
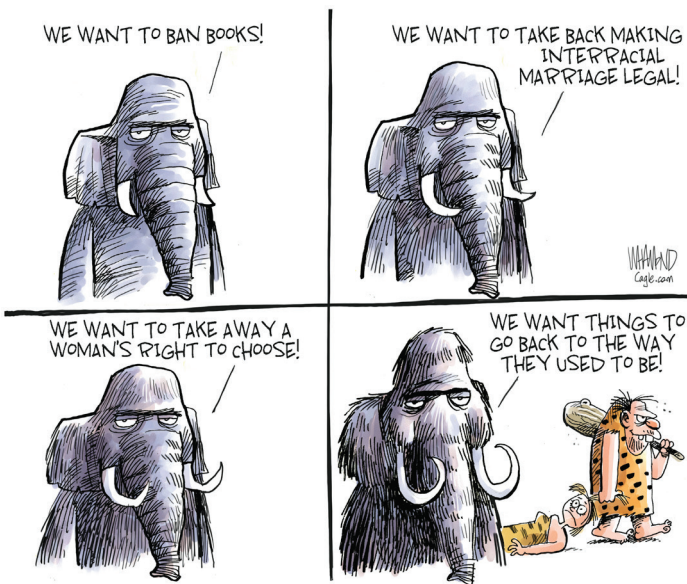
They all have several characteristics in common. They are simple, meaningful and effective.

Those are three characteristics generally missing from government climate efforts.

A suggestion: Maybe the government should stick to encouraging private enterprise to reduce its carbon footprint instead of pushing programs that will cost consumers, businesses, farmers and ranchers.

Our confidence is in private enterprise. If government wants to help, that's fine. It just shouldn't get in the way.

— Capital Press



LETTERS to the EDITOR

Not all rural Oregonians want to be Idahoans

I'd like to tell everyone to go outside and sing a song. I recommend "What a Wonderful World." Oregon has a thriving economy. The only ones who experience real hardship here are the poorest. Some have been victims of neglect all their lives. Polluted water, air and soil are harmful to development. Financial struggles are accompanied by lower school attendance. Behavior problems often become aggravated and cumulative.

Investing in healthy families isn't just a softhearted liberal policy. Even the

most conservative capitalists must be waking up and saying to themselves: Oh my, I guess we should have put money into a clean environment, good schools and economic support for struggling parents. Then their kids could have grown up to be smart, trustworthy workers capable of learning new technologies. (And getting along well with others.)

Oregon is not perfect but is certainly capable of turning these concepts into reality.

Those who are unhappy with our state should go live in Idaho for a few months. Just try it out before you push your separatist ideology. The media is in grave danger of presenting a distorted picture

of rural Oregonians. They are failing to cover anyone here who believes in keeping Oregon whole.

Mary Cooke Cove

Tricky and cheap not apt descriptions of Nash

Last week a letter accused county Commissioner Todd Nash of being "tricky" and "cheap." If Todd Nash is "tricky" and "cheap," I am young, tall, thin, athletic and incredibly sexy.

Mike Harvey Joseph

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