

Siuslaw News
 P.O. Box 10
 Florence, OR 97439

Opinion

The First Amendment
 Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

"I never considered a difference of opinion in politics, in religion, in philosophy, as cause for withdrawing from a friend." —Thomas Jefferson (1800)



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Siuslaw News

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Siuslaw News welcomes letters to the editor as part of a community discussion of issues on the local, state and national level.

Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed. All letters need to include full name, address and phone number; only name and city will be printed. Letters should be limited to about 300 words. Letters are subject to editing for length, grammar and clarity. Publication of any letter is not guaranteed and depends on space available and the volume of letters received.

Letters that are anonymous, libelous, argumentative, sarcastic or contain accusations that are unsourced or documented will not be published.

Letters containing poetry or from outside the Siuslaw News readership area will only be published at the discretion of the editor.

POLITICAL/ELECTION LETTERS:

Election-related letters must address pertinent or timely issues of interest to our readers at-large.

Letters must 1) Not be a part of letter-writing campaigns on behalf of (or by) candidates; 2) Ensure any information about a candidate is accurate, fair and not from second-hand knowledge or hearsay; and 3) Explain the reasons to support candidates based on personal experience and perspective rather than partisanship and campaign-style rhetoric.

Candidates themselves may not use the letters to the editor column to outline their views and platforms or to ask for votes; this constitutes paid political advertising.

As with all letters and advertising content, the newspaper, at the sole discretion of the publisher, general manager and editor, reserves the right to reject any letter that doesn't follow the above criteria.

Email letters to:
nhickson@thesiuslawnews.com

WHERE TO WRITE

- | | |
|--|--|
| PRES. DONALD TRUMP
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20500
Comments: 202-456-1111
Switchboard: 202-456-1414
FAX: 202-456-2461
TTY/TDD Comments:
202-456-6213
www.whitehouse.gov | U.S. REP. PETER DEFazio
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2134 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-6416
541-269-2609
541-465-6732
www.defazio.house.gov |
| OREGON GOV. KATE BROWN
160 State Capitol
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Governor's Citizens' Rep.
Message Line:
503-378-4582
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Email: Sen.ArnieRoblan@oregonlegislature.gov |
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Louisiana land mass is shrinking, not increasing

(Editor's Note: Viewpoint submissions on this and other topics are always welcome as part of our goal to encourage community discussion and exchange of perspectives.)

I wish to address comments made in the Oct. 26 article "Climate Debate Continues Part 2." In it, Mr. Ian Eales states that "New Orleans is sinking." While Mr. Eales is somewhat correct, the very relevant "How" and "Why" are not mentioned.

The facts surrounding New Orleans flooding and its relationship to the wetlands of Louisiana are well known to me. Not only was I born in southeast Louisiana and spent 29 of my 47 years there, but my grandfather was on the "Governors Task Force on Lake Ponchartrain Restoration" in the 1970s and '80s.

He managed about 35,000 acres of the wetlands west of New Orleans until the late '90s. When I was just a kid and heard loud explosions in the swamp, he explained that it was seismograph testing for natural gas, which made me ask more questions. Later when I chose the topic for a college project, he helped me understand its complexities in detail.

Like anyone who cares deeply about south Louisiana, I stay informed about what is happening there.

But even the simplest of laymen in south Louisiana can see what is happening. The changes are dramatic, obvious and happening fast. There are areas of swamp — where I spent the first 20 years of my life hunting and fishing — that are unrecognizable to me now. It is an unavoidable reality for those who live there.

The first thing that needs to be understood is that we are talking about a large delta. This means that anything that can be referred to as "land" came from the Mississippi River. Even before the levy system was built, the highest ground was that closest to the river. Every spring, the snow melt from most of America would flood its banks and bayous, bringing new sediment and freshwater like a watershed in reverse. As distance from the river increased, so did salinity levels and a lack of larger trees. This created a vast wetlands ecosystem where

25 percent of all seafood caught in America comes from. It is also the largest producer of shrimp and oysters in the northwest hemisphere.

The sinking of New Orleans and erosion of its protective wetlands is a result of several factors — all of which are manmade.

GUEST VIEWPOINT
By Bryan Haydel
Florence
(former long-time Louisiana resident)

First came the levies. They stopped the process of land growth and the flow of life-giving freshwater. Then came the petroleum industry, which dug many miles of canals through the wetlands in order to access oil and natural gas. This allows salt water to penetrate deep into the most fragile areas, killing the plant life whose roots held the otherwise loose soil together.

Development is also a problem.

In south Louisiana, it is a common practice for land developers to "levy off" a section of wetlands. Sand is trucked in for raised building foundations and massive pumping stations are built to protect the development from flooding.

This creates a situation where less wetland is asked to hold more water in a flood event. Timber harvests, invasive species brought by man (see nutria), and building with heavy bricks on little to no bedrock are all part of the story.

And now there is the alarming threat of sea level rise. Over 97 percent of climate scientists have concluded that it is happening and that it is caused by *man*. There is plenty of published data on the subject for anyone who is interested. If one is truly unbiased, they will look at as much of the data as they can.

I've heard the conspiracy theories that deny or denounce these scientists and I've given those theories plenty of thought. We native Louisianans have always been suspicious of government and institutions — or pretty much anything from the north. We've developed that skepticism in part because petroleum companies have been lying to us for so long.

Ask yourself which is more like-

ly: Did many scientists from many different countries get together and plan a conspiracy for no apparent reason, then maintain that conspiracy for decades without any whistleblowers? Or did a very few scientists realize they could make a lot of money by saying whatever the fossil fuel industry wanted to hear?

What has and is still happening to coastal Louisiana should be taken as an abject lesson for us all. Isle de Jean Charles is slated to be the first town in the U.S. to be moved and paid for by the government because of climate change. Many other towns and communities have already moved at their own expense.

The town of Delacroix, made famous and mispronounced by songwriter Bob Dylan, is but a shadow of its former self. In my youth I was able to see hints of how beautiful and abundant the bayou systems once were. We caught and bagged multitudes more fish and game than anyone does there now.

Every time I see the old poles in the Siuslaw River, I'm reminded of so many entire communities where dock poles are all that's left. The rest was hauled out or lost to the Gulf of Mexico.

But there is hope. A few restoration projects where the Mighty Mississippi has been allowed to spill its banks again in a controlled manner have been in operation for some time now. They are showing promising results. Anyone interested in these projects can learn more by going to www.coastal.la.gov.

Louisiana loses a football field sized amount of land every hour-and-a-half. As for Mr. Eales' statement that "There are at least 5,000 more square miles of coastal area than 30 years ago," I'm not sure if he is still referring to Louisiana.

I can say that if he meant there are at least 5,000 more miles of coastline in Louisiana, then he may well be correct. As one large land mass erodes and becomes a myriad of islands resembling a maze, the coastline distance increases.

On the other hand, if Mr. Eales is implying that there is more land mass now in coastal Louisiana than there was 30 years ago, then he is simply incorrect.

—Mitch Sloan
 Florence

LETTERS

NO PARKING TICKETS FOR BUSINESS OWNERS, WORKERS

It has recently come to my attention that business owners as well as their employees are being ticketed for parking too long in Old Town.

They spend a large portion of

their days either running a business or working at one and rarely have time to go out and move their vehicle.

These people are the ones who keep our town running. Why aren't they exempt from getting parking tickets? Business owners and their

employees should be provided with a vehicle window sticker that allows them to park during work hours or a designated parking area.

No more tickets for the hard working people of Old Town.