

# Opinion

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## GUEST EDITORIAL

# Wyden: 2 senators in one

### Editorial from The (Bend) Bulletin:

Oregonians are lucky to have a senator like Democrat Ron Wyden. It's like we get two senators in one.

We get Mr. Bipartisan Solution. But we also get the unfortunate Mr. Bombast.

With all the partisan rancor and political manipulation in Washington, Wyden turns up again and again as willing to work with Republicans to craft sensible compromise legislation. He has done it on Medicare reform with Paul Ryan, on the Affordable Care Act with former Sen. Scott Brown and many more times. That passion for bipartisanship to create solutions makes him an important political player for Oregon and the country.

Then there's the fact-famished bellows of Mr. Bombast. Wyden recently came out swinging against Oregon Rep. Greg Walden's bill to help reduce fire danger to Crooked River Ranch. The area is home to some 5,500 people. It is right next to federal land that has devastating potential for wildfire. And because the federal land is a wilderness study area, reducing fire danger in it gets more complicated. The bill seeks to make it easier to do mechanized fire prevention to create a better buffer for the homes.

Wyden is the first to agree it's a serious issue. "The Crooked River Ranch deserves action ASAP to reduce the devastating potential of wildfires threatening its Central Oregon community. Fire prevention efforts must do more to protect homes within the Ranch," he recently tweeted.

Mr. Bombast, though, grimly sought to portray Walden's bill as a mistake. Mr. Bombast said the bill lacked support and said it "takes a limited approach to tackling the risk of wildfires, setting a precedent to thwart future collaboration with local stakeholders and community leaders in the ongoing effort to address the threat of wildfires."

Mr. Bombast labeled the bill as lacking broad support even though it is supported by the Crooked River Ranch Homeowners Association, Crooked River Ranch Fire & Rescue, the Oregon Fire Chiefs Association, the Jefferson County commissioners, Jefferson County Sheriff Jim Adkins, and state Sen. Cliff Bentz and state Rep. Daniel Bonham, who represent the area.

So with this bill that is so flawed that Mr. Bombast insists it lacks support, is "limited" and sets a bad precedent, what happened? Wyden voted to pass it out of committee. The only change was a minor tweak to clarify that the land in question will be managed to improve fire resiliency. Hardly a transformative edit.

We asked Wyden's office for a reaction. "I take a back seat to nobody when it comes to protecting communities from wildfire and am committed to working toward a comprehensive solution for the community," he said. But Wyden did take a back seat on protecting Crooked River Ranch to both Walden and the braying of his own Mr. Bombast.

## Letters to the editor

- We welcome letters on any issue of public interest. Customer complaints about specific businesses will not be printed.
- The Baker City Herald will not knowingly print false or misleading claims. However, we cannot verify the accuracy of all statements in letters to the editor.
- Letters are limited to 350 words; longer letters will be edited for length. Writers are limited to one letter every 15 days.
- The writer must sign the letter and include an address and phone number (for verification only). Letters that do not include this information cannot be published.
- Letters will be edited for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons.

**Mail:** To the Editor, Baker City Herald,  
P.O. Box 807, Baker City, OR 97814

**Email:** news@bakercityherald.com



## Your views

### Harvey's conservative claim rings hollow; vote for Nichols

Mr. Harvey calls himself the conservative choice, but as county commission chair he is extremely liberal with spending our tax dollars for his own self-aggrandizement.

The ultimate example was his personal decision to spend thousands of taxpayer dollars unnecessarily on taking a couple of trips to Washington, D.C., which have zero real benefit to our county. No conservative would do that, especially when the county has pressing needs for that money. His poor leadership is displayed in this by the fact of his failure to consult with his co-commissioners before he made his unilateral decision to spend our money.

Mr. Harvey's failure to be above board with his fellow commissioners on the Lime/Ash Grove issue isn't the action of a conservative, and displays poor leadership. To cover it up by saying he didn't have time to get the info to them, and he didn't want to give them partial information, is a dishonest excuse. He chose not to give them the information until the last minute. By keeping his work secret he may have cost the county money. We may never know because of his blatant lack of transparency. Maybe everything ended up OK, but his approach was just plain wrong.

These are only a couple of numerous examples of Mr. Harvey's poor leadership skills and lack of honest conservative values. It's shocking that in a recent interview he said his main job is to get

the facts and present them to his fellow commissioners when in reality that is one of his major failings.

A good conservative would present and discuss all the facts before making decisions. His idea of economic growth for our county goes against what even conservative economists have said. A good leader would be open and transparent in handling county business and not unduly waste tax money.

As a former business owner, I would not hire a person with such poor skills in leadership, communication and finance as Mr. Harvey displays routinely.

I urge you to vote for transparency, fiscal responsibility and a voice for all residents of Baker County. Vote Bruce Nichols.

**Rick Meis**  
Halfway

### Harvey has proved to be an effective commissioner

I have known both candidates for Baker County Commission Position 3 for some years. I have followed closely the work of the commission also. I believe Bill Harvey has done a good job both fiscally and in his representation of county interests to create an environment to further the well-being of businesses, and of all of his constituents of Baker County. Bill is a mover and shaker, and knows how to bring folks along in his vision for Baker. I was not opposed to considering Bruce Nichols for my vote, but I have yet to see or hear reasons why I would replace a proven

leader, with someone whose accomplishments are indiscernible.

For many years, my late husband and I ran a successful business selling and repairing chain saws, logging and mining equipment. In Vern's absence, I'm still fighting the good fight. I know firsthand how important it is to have a healthy economy for small businesses to produce income in a community that is dependent upon its surrounding natural resources.

I am a member of the Baker County Natural Resource Advisory Committee, and active in the Eastern Oregon Mining Association. Commissioner Harvey is the only candidate who has put his commitments into action. He has always listened and proactively responded to the stated needs and recommendations of each group. With his history of contracting and building, Bill is keenly aware of the importance of the overall impact of these resources to our everyday lives.

As our county commissioner, Bill has readily shown his commitment to his stated goals. Given his excellent work I know of no reason why I would desire to replace him.

Under Bill's leadership of the County Commission, I am seeing growth, increasing community vitality and abundant job opportunities. I love that. Let's keep things moving. Please join me in your vote to retain Commissioner Bill Harvey.

**Alice Knapp**  
Baker City

## GUEST EDITORIAL

### Editorial from East Oregonian:

The average Oregonian might not realize it, but Pendleton is on the forefront of autonomous technology.

The UAS Range at the airport is flight-testing some of the early concept aerial vehicles that could very well fill our skies in a generation. Or sooner. One company — Airbus subsidiary A3 — is even testing a self-flying air taxi under the project name Vahana.

Getting certified to do such work took the coordination of the FAA, city of Pendleton and University of Alaska-Fairbanks. It's closely monitored to make sure the new air traffic and the old don't mix in catastrophic ways.

There's no such oversight for driverless automobiles in Oregon, or rules on the books for what happens when these vehicles are tested and ready for the road.

It may not seem like the most pressing problem for the state. We're smack in the middle of a PERS crisis that's only going to get worse, health care in rural Oregon is getting harder to afford — or even find — and our summers are filled with wildfires and drought. Driver-less cars are a thing of the future.

But regulations often chase technological advances, which can create a dangerous or unfair gap. It's valuable to look ahead at what's around the bend, even if a crash isn't imminent.

At least two companies — Daimler and Intel — have reported plans to the Oregon Department of Transportation to test autonomous vehicles, according to a story from our Capital Bureau. An Oregon task force has recommended creating rules to test such vehicles on state roads.

## CONTACT YOUR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

**President Donald Trump:** The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C. 20500; 202-456-1414; fax 202-456-2461; to send comments, go to [www.whitehouse.gov/contact](http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact).

**U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley:** D.C. office: 313 Hart Senate Office Building, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C., 20510; 202-224-3753; fax 202-228-3997. Portland office: One World Trade Center, 121 S.W. Salmon St. Suite 1250, Portland, OR 97204; 503-326-3386; fax 503-326-2900. Pendleton office: 310 S.E. Second St. Suite 105, Pendleton 97801; 541-278-1129; merkley.senate.gov.

**U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden:** D.C. office: 221 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20510; 202-224-5244; fax 202-228-2717. La Grande office: 105 Fir St., No. 210, La Grande, OR 97850; 541-962-

7691; fax, 541-963-0885; wyden.senate.gov.

**U.S. Rep. Greg Walden** (2nd District): D.C. office: 2182 Rayburn Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20515, 202-225-6730; fax 202-225-5774. La Grande office: 1211 Washington Ave., La Grande, OR 97850; 541-624-2400, fax, 541-624-2402; walden.house.gov.

**Oregon Gov. Kate Brown:** 254 State Capitol, Salem, OR 97310; 503-378-3111; [www.governor.oregon.gov](http://www.governor.oregon.gov).

**State Sen. Cliff Bentz** (R-Ontario): Salem office: 900 Court St. N.E., S-301, Salem, OR 97301; 503-986-1730. District office: P.O. Box 1027, Ontario, OR 97914; 541-889-8866.

**State Rep. Lynn Findley** (R-Vale): Salem office: 900 Court St. N.E., H-475, Salem, OR 97301; 503-986-1460. Email: [Rep.LynnFindley@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:Rep.LynnFindley@oregonlegislature.gov)

**Baker City administration:** 541-523-6541. Fred Warner Jr., city manager; Dustin Newman, police chief; Michelle Owen, public works director.

**Baker County Commission:** Baker County Courthouse 1995 3rd St., Baker City, OR 97814; 541-523-8200. Meets the first and third Wednesdays at 9 a.m.; Bill Harvey (chair), Mark Bennett, Bruce Nichols.

**Baker School District:** 2090 4th Street, Baker City, OR 97814; 541-524-2260; fax 541-524-2564. Superintendent: Mark Witty. Board meets the third Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m., Baker School District 5J office boardroom; Andrew Bryan, Kevin Cassidy, Chris Hawkins, Katie Lamb and Julie Hingtgen.