

# Opinion

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## EDITORIAL

# Local control

Whatever you think about Verizon's proposal to build a 70-foot cell tower in North Baker City, you should be troubled by one claim in the appeal the company filed after the Baker City Planning Commission voted 5-2 on Dec. 4 to deny Verizon a conditional-use permit.

That appeal was submitted by E. Michael Connors, a Portland attorney representing Verizon.

The Baker City Council will consider that appeal during a public hearing Tuesday at 7 p.m. at City Hall, 1655 First St.

Near the end of the appeal, Connors writes that if the City Council agrees with the Planning Commission majority and rejects the appeal, "It would be virtually impossible for Verizon to site a tower to resolve the significant gap in coverage and capacity in the City. That would be a clear-cut violation of the Federal Telecommunications Act."

In other words, Baker City officials can't deny Verizon's application without breaking a federal law.

This is a noxious concept — one that doesn't merely erode but utterly obliterates the longstanding and vital, precept of local control. Cities and counties have development ordinances so their elected and appointed officials, acting on behalf of, and often with testimony from, citizens, can influence what's built in their communities, and where.

If, as Connors suggests, Baker City can't reject this cell tower without violating a federal law, then the city would as well surrender its authority and allow towers to go up wherever is most convenient for the builder. That's a dismal prospect, whether this particular tower is built or not.

— Jayson Jacoby, Baker City Herald editor



## Your views

### City needs to reject Verizon's proposed cell tower

Verizon is attacking Baker City, most likely seeing us as an unprepared small town victim. Although they wish you to believe that all the skewed laws and federal oversights are in their hip pocket I am finding this to be far from the truth. I plead and beg that all of our City Council members, County and Planning Commissioners and citizens of Baker immediately Google "Physicians for safe technology." You will discover the adverse health symptoms that have been established through published studies in a multitude of countries, including the United States, and how the obscene amount of our telecommunication industry's lobby money has resulted in our government refusing to acknowledge any of these scientific studies. You will also

learn how our out of control government has taken it beyond absurd, actually making a law that any and all municipalities cannot even consider these detrimental health effects in their consideration of the proposed construction of new cell towers. Guess what Baker City Council, Baker City Planning Commission, Baker County Commissioners, Baker County citizens? — there are no "mind police," "thought police" or "consider police" preventing you from including this in your decision making! No one is coming to arrest you!

Verizon and other like entities are finding it increasingly more difficult to sell their B.S. They are desperate to increase profits and are finding growing resistance.

On this website you will discover tactics and ordinances that other cit-

ies, counties, states and countries are using to combat the false need that these conglomerates claim. Navigate your way through "Physicians for safe technology" and you will soon decipher that "according to Verizon" Baker City's "need for another Verizon cell tower" is only a desperate need for Verizon to increase its presence and profits due to other jurisdictions preventative legislation, lawsuits and public awareness.

Our City Council has an obligation to back the Planning Commission's recommendation of denial. It is an obstruction to scenic views, it is an industrial "spot zone" surrounded by residential zoning, has potential to decrease property values and exceeds the county height limit.

Peace to all!

Mike Meyer  
Baker City

## OTHER VIEWS

### Editorial from The (Bend) Bulletin:

When the carbon tax legislation failed in the Legislature, proponents of the carbon tax went right back to the drawing board.

Ballot measures are brewing. New legislation is being drafted for the 2020 session. And what we'd like to talk about are some slides Gov. Kate Brown's office has apparently been using to explain the administration's next steps. We found them released on Brown's public records log.

The slides give insights into the governor's carbon tax policy objectives, the plans to try to mitigate some bad effects and a chart showing what the governor could do through executive action.

We don't have a lot of detail. It's just not in the slides. Charles Boyle, press secretary for Gov. Brown, told us the slides were used by staff "to update various stakeholder groups—including business groups, advocacy groups,

and state legislators — about some of the potential updates to last year's legislation that could be considered during the short session."

Not every policy idea in the slides will likely make into the legislation, he added. "Clearly, though, doing nothing is not an option, not when we see how climate change is already hurting our rural communities and economy."

The policy objectives in the slides aren't surprises or new — reducing emissions by 45% by 2035 and 80% by 2050, keeping the regulation low cost and raising money for investments in green energy.

The general plan is the same as the one for the 2019 legislation. The state would replace its current greenhouse gas reduction goals with comprehensive emissions limits that decline each year. Some businesses would have to get allowances every year to cover their

emissions. They could do it through a state auction or trading for them. When the state auctions off allowances, it will raise money that the state may, in turn, spend on investments to make the state greener or mitigate some of the effects of the new regulation.

One contentious issue of the 2019 bill was what it might do to prices at the gas pump. Critics of that proposal said it would have raised prices almost immediately to \$5 a gallon. Supporters of the bill said gas prices would rise by about \$3 by 2050. Whoever may be right, a concept in the slides is to gradually implement the changes in gas prices. It would be somewhat like how the changes in Oregon's minimum wage were implemented. It would be phased in, starting in Oregon's more metropolitan counties, Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington and spreading.

A proposal in the slides would also require

that the bill be reauthorized in 2035. That might reassure some people that impacts and forecasting about the future will be reassessed.

There's also a comparison in the slides between what could be accomplished with legislation and what could be accomplished just with the governor's executive authority. Basically, legislation could accomplish much more. For instance, the governor could not extend her authority over emissions from imported electricity. She also could not auction off permits or allowances — meaning the state would not be generating any revenue for green investments.

Draft versions of new legislation are floating around among Oregon policymakers. The bill will arguably be the most important legislation of 2020. But will the changes be enough so Republican lawmakers don't walkout to block it? We'll see.

# The irrational fear of being bereft of a book

I have for many years — many more, indeed, than I would prefer — harbored an irrational fear of being stuck with nothing good to read.

This sensation is similar to the disquieting feeling I sometimes have just after awakening from a dream in which I have failed to meet some crucial deadline.

But at least that post-dream discomfort is fleeting, ephemeral in the way that dreams themselves most often are.

By contrast, my phobia about reading material — perhaps this is a touch of exaggeration, but phobia seems to me the word that best captures the flavor of the thing — can be dogged, and all the more annoying for its persistence.

That I recognize this, in periods of particular lucidity, as irrational in no way eases the sense of dread that plagues me when I'm nearing the final chapter but have no volume waiting to cut in, as a flesh dance partner might.

There are at least two reasons



JAYSON JACOBY

why this affliction ought not interfere with my equilibrium as acutely as it sometimes does.

First, we have a fair number of books in our home, a selection which dozens of times has proved capable of satiating my appetite for a nourishing bit of prose.

Second, we live little more than a mile from the Baker County Library, where the literary larder is of course considerably weightier.

Yet even though I realize that I haven't ever actually been left bereft of anything worth reading for long, that nagging sense that the next time might be different creeps in, as unwanted as a burglar. I can never quite suppress the notion that once I flip past the last page I will have no recourse but to ponder the way the corners of the mould-

ing boards around a door don't line up quite right, or engage in some similarly inane pastime.

I had occasion to ponder this peculiar problem the other evening when I passed half an hour or so at the library.

This is rather longer than I typically linger.

Usually I either arrive bearing a mental list of specific targets, or else I peruse the new nonfiction shelves where I'm all but certain to quickly find something intriguing.

On this evening, though, I was waiting for my daughter, Olivia, who was attending a Battle of the Books meeting.

(A competition, by the way, which doesn't involve the exchange of actual blows, no matter its martial title. Participants instead answer questions about books they have read — ideally, anyway.)

I had already claimed my library copy of Bill Bryson's latest masterpiece — "The Body: A Guide For Occupants" — so I wandered to the north part of the building where

the magazines are kept.

I selected a couple issues of "Skeptical Inquirer" and then I did something I almost never do at the library.

I sat down.

There was an empty nook and I picked a chair that looked comfortable.

I sat there for maybe 20 minutes and I thought it was an uncommonly pleasant time — this, even though I have a great affection for libraries, one of long standing.

It was of course quiet, as libraries are supposed to be.

But I was struck by how comforting it was simply to sit there in the warmth and the light and to ponder the great riches packed into their orderly rows, so near and so numerous.

Like other places that are reliable, the library is easy to take for granted, it seems to me.

But it is no small thing to have such unfettered access to so much information — and, perhaps more important, to so much of the in-

imitable pleasure that reading can convey.

I know better than to hope my interlude in the library was an epiphany.

I will, I'm certain, continue to be prone to melancholy, if not something closer to panic, when the stack of pages on the wrong side of the bookmark gets perilously thin and I have not yet set my eyes on a succeeding volume.

But I'll try to remember those tranquil minutes in the library.

I need to make that memory a sort of security blanket — the equivalent to that most gratifying period just after my birthday each year, when I typically spend on books most of the money my parents send in the mail.

For a few weeks I can wholly banish my fear simply by glancing at the bedside table and its stack of books, each a potential treasure, and none yet plundered.

Jayson Jacoby is editor of the Baker City Herald.