

# Opinion

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## EDITORIAL

# Less power, more money

The four hydroelectric dams on the lower Snake River in Southeast Washington might seem far removed — geographically and in other ways — from Baker County. But the future of those dams could have a direct effect on our monthly power bills.

And unfortunately, Oregon Gov. Kate Brown's recent decision to have our state file a federal lawsuit challenging the existence of those dams has the potential to make electricity more expensive, less reliable and dirtier.

The lawsuit, filed March 4, contests the findings in an environmental study the federal government released in October 2020. One of its key conclusions is that removing the four dams — Lower Granite, Little Goose, Lower Monumental and Ice Harbor — is not necessary to help struggling populations of endangered and threatened salmon and steelhead. Moreover, the environmental impact statement found that breaching those dams, which can produce more than 2,000 megawatts of renewable power, could result in higher power rates and an increase in carbon emissions.

That's a significant concern for Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative, said Joseph Hathaway, OTEC's communications manager. OTEC buys its electricity from the Bonneville Power Administration, which markets power produced by federal dams on the Snake and Columbia rivers.

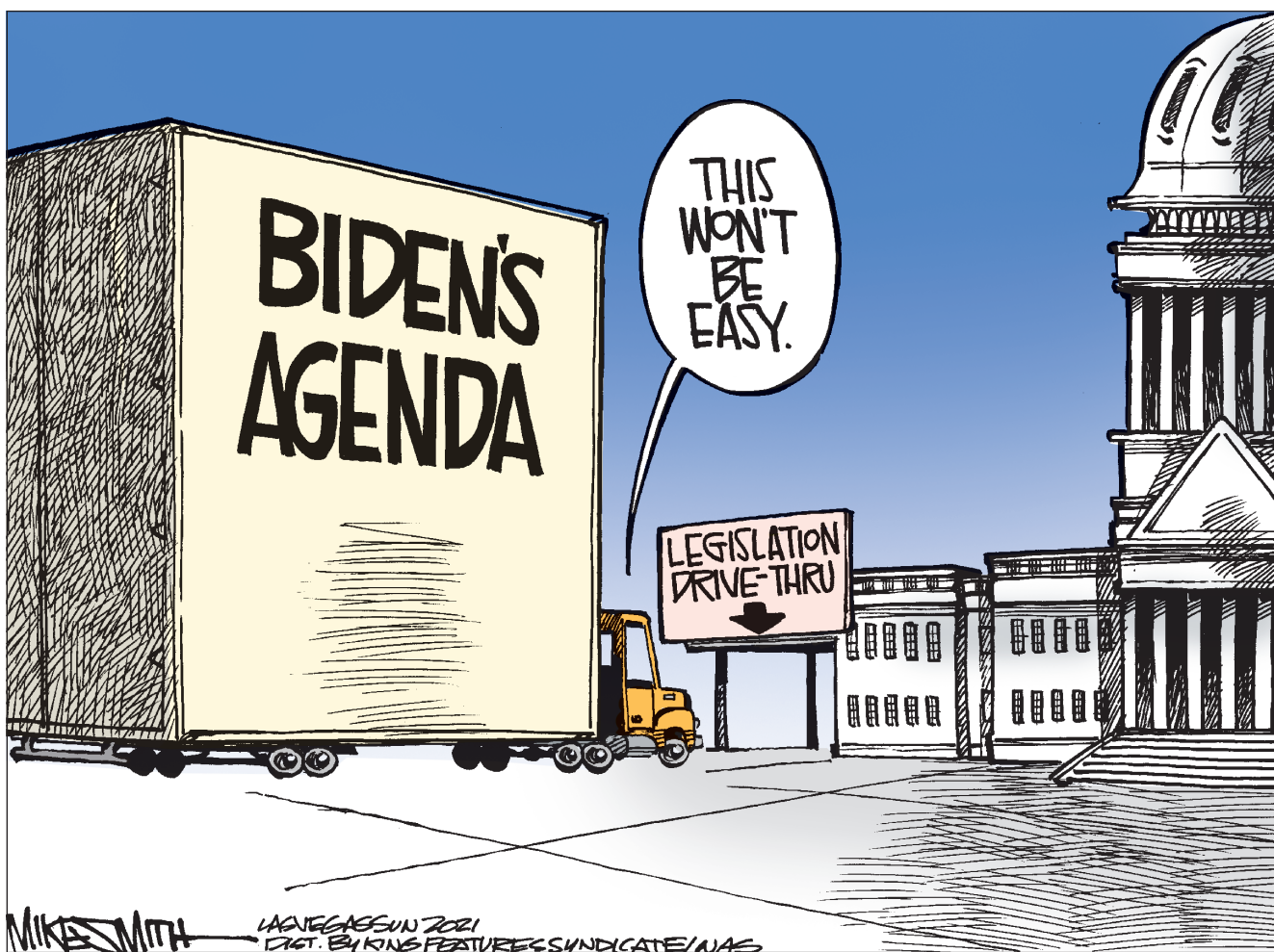
Brown's decision to legally challenge the federal government's support for keeping the four dams is troubling because in October 2020 the governor joined her counterparts in Idaho, Washington and Montana to form the Columbia Basin Collaborative, with a goal of restoring salmon and steelhead populations in the Columbia and Snake River systems while minimizing the effect on the electricity grid and the regional economy.

Oregon also has supported a previous plan that included spilling more water through the dams during spring to improve survival rates in salmon and steelhead migrating to the Pacific Ocean. That plan is included in the October 2020 federal decision that is the target of the lawsuit Oregon filed March 4.

The governor's actions are inconsistent.

Oregon can't reasonably participate in a four-state collaborative designed to help salmon and steelhead, while keeping the dams and protecting the electricity grid and the economy, and simultaneously be a plaintiff in a lawsuit that seeks to overturn the current federal dam operation plan.

— Jayson Jacoby, Baker City Herald editor



## Your views

### Bond measure adds to the tax burden for residents

Just a few words on the bond issue. Every year our taxes go up 3 to 4% and it is getting pretty high. It is getting hard for those of us on Social Security to pay it.

What if the school board would quit making new jobs and not be paying such high wages. The top 10 wage earners for the school are costing us at least \$1 million a year and they will be getting raises. Too bad they wouldn't do like the sawmills did us and cut wages 10%. But they don't do that any more, they just tax the people instead.

Joe Johnson  
Baker City

### Americans need to wake up before they lose freedom

I wrote a letter to the editor about 10 years ago that bears repeating. I wrote about this country on the verge of losing its freedom as we know it. The difference between a citizen and a subject! Seems a lot of us still don't know the big difference between freedom and domination. Looks like we are about to make a lot of the same mistakes again. As it was said then, freedom only stays free as long as the people are willing to stand up and fight for it. Too many still have their head stuck in the sand, not realizing what is still exposed. We have some leaders who have their own agenda and are willing to destroy our country and our way of life to get it (power and money). There was a Russian leader years ago who said, "America would fail from the inside by its own people." Sure hope he's wrong.

But now look, we have the radicals, Socialist party wanting to change this country. I don't know about you, but I like it the way it is. It's time to wake up, and come out of the dream world, time to realize freebies are not free, someone must pay for them. The Constitution was written for us to keep big government in check, not the other way around. But big government is getting louder and louder while you and I are being silenced. Time to wake up, American people, before it's too late. We don't need a Communist takeover.

In closing, we need to send Vice President Harris a map to the U.S.-Mexico border, poor thing is having a hard time finding it. Hey, Joe! It's we the people, not the government. And what part of "shall not be infringed on" do you not understand. If you want a woman president, I vote for Judge Jeanine!

Richard Fox  
Baker City

### Trump acolytes need to concede that he lost

Hi everybody. "Moscow" Mike here. I wish to thank Retrumplican Ricky Rienks for bestowing our former president's favorite place to visit with his best friend Putin as my new handle. Thank you Rick! I am not sure your guru would approve..but thanks anyway.

Things have been accumulating on my mind lately, believe it or not. First I wish to let all those that won't wear a mask, won't social distance, and won't get vaccinated know that you need to quit your incessant whining about mandate or restrictions. If just the

mask and social distancing had been adhered to the mandates would be a moot point. I realize you are special, you have rights, blah, blah, blah, me, me, me ... so sorry but it doesn't work both ways princes and princesses. I understand that our dysfunctional City Council is reinforcing all of this crybaby ridiculousness, but remember, you can actually think for yourself! If you have watched our Mayor you can be assured she is only thinking of her own, excuse me, disturbing self. I am having great difficulty learning, and coming to grips with, just how many bitter conspiracy-embracing citizens live in our local community. This is so reminiscent of the rampant willingness to continue, ad nauseam, to accept a certified con man, failed businessman and criminal TV personality as anything but a democracy killing traitor, and that is putting it mildly. Absolutely mind boggling! Please take down the stupid signs and silly flags the treasonous criminal lost and will most likely be going to jail. So when you see letters from the Culleys, pathetically trying to deny racism while actually promoting and justifying racism, and the misconception of the Rienks who think Fox News is actually news, I hope others will not judge our beautiful corner of paradise by the words and actions of a few. Lastly all those that wish to move the borders of Oregon and give it to Idaho, please just move. And as always.. I will be happy to help you pack. Peace to all, Moscow Mike.

Mike Meyer  
Baker City

## OTHER VIEWS

# Biden needs a compassion compass

By Jay Ambrose

Too much of the Biden administration now comes down to self-righteous compassion and fiddle-faddle analysis without a hint of wisdom, or even of common sense. A recent example — with more to be reviewed — is an absurd decision to strip U.S. pharmaceutical companies of a patent that, like so many others, protects their accomplishments, profits and lives all over the world.

The point is to deny them intellectual property rights for their creation of vaccines shielding people from COVID-19 infection so that other entities can produce them free of cost. Supposedly, this move will alleviate misery in countries such as India right now suffering mightily. The truth is these countries could actually suffer more as a consequence.

It's hard to watch TV news, see Indian heartache and not want to help in some way or the other, but means of meaningful assistance have been in the works. After years of assiduous study of vaccines and technical conquest, drug companies in the United States are gushing with wondrously effective anti-coronavirus doses ever closer to availability for overseas rescue. It's reported the firms had been establishing foreign partnerships that could chip in with proper guidance.

What we did not need was a president exerting powers he does not have. Patent laws should be and have been up to Congress, and

this autocrat's announced deal with the World Trade Organization will deliver intellectual property to foreign producers for free so that they can fumble while robbing pharmaceutical masters.

Even though consumers will never quit complaining about high drug prices, understand that our competitive, free-market system has incentivized more health-enhancing, life-saving drug discoveries than in any other nation anywhere. Yes, some companies have crossed the line just as most have been squeezed into higher prices through the established bureaucratic principle of regulatory miscalculation.

What we're now talking about is weakening the rights that spur innovation and make us great. Let's see what happens as Moderna and Pfizer stock shares plummet and other companies worry about similar mistreatment now and in the future. Regressive progressives will tell us how anti-capitalist aspirations solve all problems eventually. Actually, when you substitute punishment for rewards due medicinal heroes and their humanistic visions, you are more likely to kill people.

As another example of miswrought sympathy, now consider how Biden and congressional buddies whooped it up for at least a \$300 federal addition to state unemployment insurance checks, making it just maybe more profitable to stay home, sip some beer and watch TV instead of searching out jobs among

the 7.4 million increase in them a couple of months ago.

In March, virus-plagued Americans snapped up 916,000 employment opportunities with the expert expectation that, in April, they would grab a million. Instead, they took 266,000, a real letdown that could also relate to fears of infection, the kinds of jobs most available and lack of necessary skills, for example. But here is what you should not suppose — that the Biden trillions aimed at socialist delight won't decrease enthusiasm for long commutes, possibly dicey bosses or even the pride, dignity and independence of providing socially and economically crucial products and services.

Meanwhile Biden has plans to pay for at least some of all the government spending, debt increases and printed money backed up by undue optimism. He wants to raise corporate taxes from 21 percent to maybe 28 percent or maybe just 25 percent along with other squelch-the-rich proposals, such as higher taxes on top capital gains. Even putting aside legalistic loophole research, the cost will be strains on wages and new jobs. Prices will get higher as we get ever closer to equality of hardship.

Compassion needs a compass.

Jay Ambrose is an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service. Readers may email him at [speaktjay@aol.com](mailto:speaktjay@aol.com).

## Letters to the editor

- 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.

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