

## EDITORIAL

Progress on  
beef industry  
problems?

Cattle ranchers have been talking about the issues for several years. But few things attract attention as strongly as dollars and cents.

And with retail beef prices rising by 21% over the past year, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, plenty of consumers' eyes have been widened.

And now, it appears, the Biden administration has been roused as well.

Federal officials announced recently that \$1 billion from the 2021 American Rescue Plan Act would be diverted to try to deal with problems in the meat processing industry and to encourage the construction of smaller, regional packing plants.

This is precisely what many ranchers, including Curtis Martin of North Powder, and Matt McElligott, who lives between Haines and North Powder, have been advocating for. McElligott is president-elect of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, and Martin is a past president.

Both ranchers said that with four companies controlling about 85% of meat processing in the U.S., ranchers have little clout in setting prices for their product. And because building smaller meatpacking plants is both expensive and complex due to regulations, breaking that logjam is difficult.

Expanding processing not only could benefit ranchers financially, but it would give consumers more choices — including one that Martin said he hears often from people, which is the option of buying packaged beef raised, almost literally, in their own backyards.

The situation likely won't be improved rapidly. But the Biden administration's recognition that problems exist is a welcome initial step.

— Jayson Jacoby, Baker City Herald editor

THERE'S MORE BAD NEWS ON THE WAY??

I'm back!!

Me too!

Gasp... tell us  
it ain't so!

Oh, nooooo!



## OTHER VIEWS

River Democracy Act: We're  
still waiting to see the maps

**Matt  
McElligott**

Some things from 2021 are still lingering in 2022, like the River Democracy Act that Senators Wyden and Merkley are pushing. They are trying to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968.

For several months I've been following this issue and still there are no answers to many revolving questions. Like why are some of the designated streams not streams at all, but dry washes? Why are the stream buffers increased from a quarter a mile to half a mile? The Act has pages of coordinates of the streams, rivers, and dry gulches to be protected, but not one map.

In May 2021, the Oregon Cattlemen's Association asked for the maps and then they asked again in November. As of this writing, we still don't have the maps from Wyden's office. I know of two counties in Eastern Oregon that have at their own expense, hired an engineering firm to map the coordinates in the Act in order to have a visual map of the af-

ected streams. These visual maps give the county a picture of how this Act will impact them. It is unconscionable that any county government should have to spend money from its general fund to map these streams when information should be available upon request from Senator Wyden or Merkley. Yet, they continue to ignore the requests. How will this affect livestock grazing and other natural resource users?

This Act talks a lot about fire resiliency but supplies no details as to how locking up 3.1 million acres of federal land will reduce threat of fire to land, lumber, and lives. What will the longterm economic effect of this bill have on rural Oregon? Wyden and his team expound on the great benefits of tourism and the dollars spent on recreation. "Money will flow like Mana from the Gods to rural Oregon." That's the well-polished sales pitch and talking points pounded into their heads at staff meetings.

When hikers, bikers and ATVers visit rural Oregon most of them bring their own tents, campers, or RV's. They fill their coolers and gas tanks at home and don't spend much in the small towns they drive through. Wyden's bill has a

\$30 million price tag. Not just for the first year but every year ... forever! Only \$5 million of that is earmarked, what is the other \$25 million for? They haven't answered that one either.

The original intent of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was to preserve certain rivers with "outstanding, natural, cultural, and recreational values in a free-flowing condition." This Act as presented is a vast departure from the original Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. If this act passes into law, it will set grave precedent that will enable law makers to circumvent protocol and procedures. Our Senators were elected to represent all Oregonians, not a select demographic.

Please take the time to look up SB 192. If you don't like what you see, if you don't want another 4,700 miles of streams and 3.1 million acres of Oregon locked up, reach out to Oregon's senators, and let them know.

- Sen. Ron Wyden: 202-224-5244
- Sen. Jeff Merkley: 202-224-3753

*Matt McElligott, who has a cattle ranch between Haines and North Powder, is president-elect of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association.*

## OTHER VIEWS

## Reflecting on Biden's first year in office

## Editorial from The Baltimore Sun:

One year into Joe Biden's first term as president, it's safe to say that the Democrat's performance has not met lofty expectations. His average approval rating, at 49% according to Gallup, is better than Republican Donald Trump's was at this point, but that's not saying much. Trump's 38% was the lowest first-year approval rating of any president post World War II, and all other presidents since then — except Biden — have averaged 57% or higher.

Of course, those presidents didn't start off in year two of a pandemic that not only has wreaked havoc on our mental and physical health, but the economy and the supply chain. The latter is backlogged largely because of a worker shortage (due to illness or disillusion) amid increased demand for goods. And how much any president can affect that is debatable, despite Biden's release of an "action plan" aimed at rebuilding U.S. supply chains. Still, 62% of registered voters blame Biden at least in part for the blockage, according to a poll conducted by Politico and the Morning Consult.

Wednesday, on the eve of his year anniversary, the president held what was only his second formal news conference since taking office. He defended his governance, claiming to have "done remarkably well" despite significant pushback from Republicans. "I did not anticipate that there would be such a stalwart effort to make sure that the most important thing was that President Biden didn't get anything done," he complained.

Tempting as it is to dismiss that comment as a throwaway, pass the buck line, we should not. The country is arguably more politically and culturally divided today than it has been during any other time since the Civil War. And much of the Republican Party has shifted from one of conservatism to extremism, with many members focusing more on radical conspiracy theories around election results or white identity politics and obstructionism, than traditional GOP ideologies of national defense, small government and business promotion.

Both circumstances are consequences of the prior officeholder's presidency. And we should take a moment here to

consider what the country would look like should Donald Trump have retained the presidency. By most any measure, we would be worse off.

And Biden has had some wins — big ones. The \$1.2 trillion infrastructure deal he struck is the largest of its kind since Dwight D. Eisenhower's historic interstate highway plan of 1956. It will rebuild the country's roads, clean our drinking pipes and drive the creation of hundreds of thousands of jobs. And the \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief plan enacted in March has the potential to reshape the country's social sector. Under Biden's leadership, more than 60% of the population also has been vaccinated, and unemployment has now fallen to a pandemic low.

But the failures on his watch are stark. Democrats were trounced in November elections; inflation is rising, along with gas prices; the Afghanistan withdrawal was a mess; and Biden's signature legislation, the "Build Back Better" bill, has hit a wall. And then there is the devastating failure to pass voting rights legislation this month, a critical component to the Democratic agenda.

Also of concern is the shifting guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the lack of preparation for a fast-moving coronavirus variant like omicron. While we understand that scientists are learning in real time how to handle this virus, the mixed messaging and lack of adequate testing and protection resources have been detrimental to public health.

Messaging overall may be Biden's biggest problem. He made big promises — and he didn't deliver. He is not, at least not yet, the reincarnation of Franklin D. Roosevelt many had hoped. There were factors outside Biden's control, certainly. But as the person raising hopes, he's the natural target of disappointment when they're dashed.

If he is, as he's said, planning to run for a second term, he's going to have to recalibrate his approach, starting now. He can still think big, but he's going to have to act small, given the hand he's been dealt. We need realism and results. Hyperbole does not help; we want Honest Joe at the helm.

For his second year in office, not being Donald Trump will not be enough.

## Editorial from The Detroit News:

Not only has President Joe Biden failed to fulfill his promise to unite a broken nation, his rhetoric is now actively contributing to our divide. The president must watch his tone. He's starting to sound like the man he replaced.

In an angry, rambling rant in Georgia last week, Biden suggested those Americans who oppose the Democratic drive to strip states of their constitutional right to run their own elections are racists and segregationists.

His speech not only distorted the facts about Georgia's voter integrity law, it compared it to Jim Crow-era policies, and likened its supporters to Confederates who want to tear down our democracy.

It was delivered in the same confrontational cadence as the president's address commemorating the anniversary of the Jan. 6 Capitol riot.

The Atlanta speech has been widely criticized for both its content and its tone. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell said of his old friend and colleague, "I

did not recognize the man at the podium," adding that Biden's remarks were incoherent.

Another former Senate colleague, Illinois Sen. Dick Durbin, a Democrat, conceded, "Perhaps the president went a little too far in his rhetoric," before defending the sentiment of his remarks. For that mild rebuke, Durbin has drawn the ire of fellow Democrats, including Rep. Jim Clyburn of South Carolina.

How's that for unifying the country?

Biden's remarks fit into his administration's view of its opponents. Last year his Justice Department agreed to investigate some parents who protest COVID mandates, after a national school board group likened them to domestic terrorists.

Post Donald Trump, the nation needed a period of calm and healing. Biden promised to bring that. Instead, he's committed himself to passing the most contentious policies with the barest of Democratic majorities in Congress.

His promise of being the presi-

dent for all Americans now leaves out the roughly half of voters who disagree with the radical transformation Democrats are trying to force on the nation.

Instead of recognizing the country's sharp differences and working toward bipartisan compromise, Biden, in classic Trump fashion, is demonizing his opponents with defamatory labels and outright lies.

Fact-checkers noted a number of false claims made by Biden about Georgia's voting law. And yet the president continues to repeat them.

Distortion is no way to build trust in what Democrats are attempting to do with their federal voting bill.

A year into his presidency, Biden sounds more like Trump than he does the unifier he promised America.

He should mind his tone, and when he speaks, he should speak to all of America with respect.

Had voters wanted lies, bluster and hateful rhetoric, they would have kept the other guy.

## CONTACT YOUR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

**President Joe Biden:** The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C. 20500; 202-456-1111; to send comments, go to [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov).

**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. Baker City office, 1705 Main St., Suite 504, 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. Cliff Bentz (2nd District):** D.C. office: 1239 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20515, 202-225-6730; fax 202-225-5774. Medford office: 14 N. Central Avenue Suite 112, Medford, OR 97500; Phone: 541-776-4646; fax: 541-779-0204; Ontario office: 2430 S.W. Fourth Ave., No. 2, Ontario, OR 97914; Phone: 541-709-2040. bentz.house.gov.

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

**Oregon State Treasurer Tobias Read:** oregon.treasurer@ost.state.or.us; 350 Winter St. NE, Suite 100, Salem OR 97301-3896; 503-378-4000.

**Oregon Attorney General Ellen F. Rosenblum:** Justice Building, Salem, OR 97301-4096; 503-378-4400.

**Oregon Legislature:** Legislative documents and information are available online at [www.leg.state.or.us](http://www.leg.state.or.us).

**State Sen. Lynn Findley (R-Ontario):** Salem office: 900 Court St. N.E., S-403, Salem, OR 97301; 503-986-1460. Email: Sen. LynnFindley@oregonlegislature.gov

**State Rep. Mark Owens (R-Crane):** Salem office: 900 Court St. N.E., H-475, Salem, OR 97301; 503-986-1460. Email: Rep. MarkOwens@oregonlegislature.gov

**Baker City Hall:** 1655 First Street, P.O. Box 650, Baker City, OR 97814; 541-523-6541; fax 541-524-2049. City Council meets the second and fourth Tuesdays at 7 p.m. in

Council Chambers. Councilors Jason Spriet, Kerry McQuisten, Shane Alderson, Joanna Dixon, Heather Sells, Johnny Waggoner Sr. and Dean Guyer.

**Baker City administration:** 541-523-6541. Jonathan Cannon, city manager; Ty Duby, police chief; Sean Lee, fire 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 County departments:** 541-523-8200. Travis Ash, sheriff; Noodle Perkins, roadmaster; Greg Baxter, district attorney; Alice Durlinger, county treasurer; Stefanie Kirby, county clerk; Kerry Savage, county assessor.

**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. Council Chambers, Baker City Hall, 1655 First St.; Chris Hawkings, Andrew Bryan, Travis Cook, Jessica Dougherty, Julie Huntington.