

## EDITORIAL

# Private progress made on climate

Not to be critical of government, but if you want something done, you're usually best off looking to private enterprise.

It's not that government can't do it, it's just that government too often gets in the way of itself — and everyone else.

Take, for example, efforts to slow climate change. At the state and federal levels, a hodge-podge of climate programs has emerged over the years. Most are aimed at jacking up oil and gas prices.

By doing that, they are supercharging inflation, which is now 7.9%, the highest it's been since 1982.

The federal government has been particularly inept in its climate efforts. It has subsidized "green" companies such as Tesla, which in turn has built factories overseas, including China, the biggest climate polluter on the planet. That country produces 30% of the world's carbon dioxide and continues to add to its fleet of 1,110 coal-fired power generation plants to run all of those Chinese-built Teslas.

By comparison, India operates the second-largest number of coal-fired plants, 285.

In the meantime, the federal government also has discouraged domestic oil and natural gas production while going to countries such as Venezuela, Iran and Saudi Arabia looking for more oil.

In Oregon, the unelected bureaucrats in the Department of Environment Quality are doing an end-run around the Legislature with their "Climate Protection Program."

In Washington, the Department of Ecology is aiming at forcing refineries to reduce their greenhouse gases by 28% in four years.

That means consumers and businesses — you — will ultimately be saddled with higher gasoline and diesel prices.

The carbon footprints of Oregon and Washington are minuscule compared to those of China, India and Russia, or even California. What we in the Northwest do to slow climate change matters, but not very much. Washington produces about 0.19% of global carbon emissions, while Oregon produces about 0.17%. That's according to each state and the Our World in Data website.

With that in mind, we were greatly interested in a new private enterprise effort that appears to have all of the trappings of success. Organic Valley, a cooperative of organic dairy farmers, last month announced its Carbon Insetting Program as a means of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

This program is the essence of simplicity. Instead of setting up some confusing government-style effort that requires a battalion of new employees, Organic Valley will pay co-op members for reducing their carbon footprint. More efficient lighting and coolers, installing solar panels, planting trees and better manure management are among the activities that will reduce or offset carbon dioxide and methane production.

The efforts will be certified by a third party, SustainCERT, to determine the impacts.

In return, the farmers will receive the market rate, about \$15, for every metric ton of carbon that is either sequestered or otherwise prevented from entering the atmosphere.

Others in agriculture are developing efforts that will similarly reduce their impact on the climate.

They all have several characteristics in common. They are simple, meaningful and effective.

Those are three characteristics generally missing from government climate efforts.

A suggestion: Maybe the government should stick to encouraging private enterprise to reduce its carbon footprint instead of pushing programs that will cost consumers, businesses, farmers and ranchers.

Our confidence is in private enterprise. If government wants to help, that's fine. It just shouldn't get in the way.

*Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the Baker City Herald. Columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the Baker City Herald.*



## YOUR VIEWS

### It's time to clean up some junky yards in Baker City

I believe it's time to clean up a few homes around here. It has been a few years, a lot of talk. Our town is looking like a junkyard. When I drive up and down Campbell on the west side of the tracks, there are two or three places that look awful. On the other side of the tracks they are throwing stuff away. Is there anyone doing something or saying anything about it? No!

Well, I think they should get on it. I also hear the police say they can't do anything. Well, something needs to be done, and now. What is the matter with people? Do they really want to live like this?

So please clean up your yards.

Sharon Styer  
Baker City

### Why I'm supporting Sam Palmer for U.S. Senate

Few industries are as vital to the economic health of Baker County as the wood-products industry.

And nothing is more vital to that industry, in turn, than healthy, resilient forests.

Catastrophic fires caused by poor management, however, destroy both. And no one understands all this better than Grant County Commissioner Sam Palmer, who — with my enthusiastic support — is seeking Oregon's 2022 Republican U.S. Senate nomination.

As a young man, Sam served 10 years on the U.S. Forest Service's John Day helicopter firefighting team. On assignment in 1990, Sam risked his life to rescue a civilian bus driver from a raging firestorm, for which he was awarded the U.S. Department of Agriculture's highest commendation.

As co-owner of a small logging company, Sam has become intimately familiar

with commercial forestry practices — and with the government regulations that hinder both efficient harvesting and overall forest health.

Sam is an elected commissioner of heavily forested Grant County and a member of the Blues Intergovernmental Council. In these positions, Sam has analyzed countless natural resource research documents and historical records.

And from all this, Sam has derived one overarching conclusion: To help end the catastrophic fires that destroy Eastern Oregon's forests and resource-based livelihoods, governments need to ease their restrictions on logging, thinning and grazing — proven ways to clear the dead and diseased trees and undergrowth that feed and sustain those fires. As a U.S. Senator, Sam will sponsor legislation to do just that.

Where stands Senator Ron Wyden — the liberal Democrat Sam seeks to replace? He has introduced the "River Democracy Act," which would hamper logging and thinning on an additional 4,700 square miles of Oregon public lands — where they then would be, warns Congressman Cliff Bentz, "just waiting to be burned and ruined."

The choice is clear. Join me in supporting Sam Palmer for Oregon's 2022 Republican U.S. Senate nomination.

Shane Alderson  
Baker City

### Rural Fire District needs to live within its means

Baker Rural Fire District claims that district is growing. I doubt that Baker County is getting any larger, but I will say that from BCRFD own statement that the majority of growth in Baker County is in the west part of Baker Valley. So what does BCRFD do, they increase their response time, increase the miles they travel, increase their operating cost by moving an

agency that serves solely the county out of the county and purchases a building in town. They also claim without this levy homeowners insurance may go up due to reduced services, well guess what, one of the first questions insurance companies ask homeowners is how many miles to the nearest fire station, and when they learn the county fire department moved to town your rates may increase anyway. BCRFD also stated that they looked into building a facility in the county at an estimated cost of over 3 million dollars. Well they didn't look very hard, just last summer was a 13-acre property in the west part of Baker Valley with two large metal buildings, one 80'x100' and one 65'x80' along with a newly remodeled residence that they could have leased out for additional income all for 1.3 million dollars.

Now about this \$1 per thousand value 5-year levy request. BCRFD states in their own website that they are an agency with no paid employees. They use their equipment and services a minimal number of days per year. Currently they receive through a permanent levy \$.67 per thousand value, which in the 5 years will net them over \$663,000. This amount is greater than the payback rate of a \$4 million school bond. Now they want \$1 per thousand value on top of that, which will net them over an additional \$761,000 and if this passes between the two of them this amount would be over three times greater than the payback rate of a \$4 million dollar school bond. But BCRFD says this is only a 5-year levy, I guess the district growth will cease in 5 years, or maybe they will have their fancy new building in town and all of its luxury furnishings paid off with this levy money. I think they need to live within their means, or better yet sharpen their pencil and apply for some of the billions of dollars of grant monies available.

Bruce Morrison  
Baker City

## OTHER VIEWS

# Biden's refreshing silence on Hunter

### Editorial from St. Louis Post-Dispatch:

It's still unclear whether the smoke around Hunter Biden's foreign financial connections actually indicates a fire. That's what federal investigators are (and should be) exploring. But here's what's already clear about the investigation into President Joe Biden's son: The president hasn't responded by firing people, publicly lashing out at investigators or otherwise obstructing justice. Instead, he has responsibly stayed out of it. What a refreshing change from his predecessor's campaign of obstruction and vengeance in response to legitimate questions about his own foreign entanglements.

What began as a federal inquiry into Hunter Biden's unpaid taxes during the Obama administration — while Biden's father was vice president — has since expanded to probe his profitable roles in troubled energy deals in Ukraine and China.

The probe was expanded during Donald Trump's presidency, under a Trump-appointed U.S. attorney, even

as Joe Biden's political threat to Trump rose. Still, the same U.S. attorney has been allowed to pursue the case with the change of administrations. Contrast that to Trump's firing of FBI Director James Comey, his pardoning of cronies, his public trashing of investigators and other brazen steps designed to thwart the inquiry by the special counsel into Trump's troubling Russia connections.

To hear some tell it, the Hunter Biden saga is a smoking gun that implicates President Biden in influence-peddling and other nefarious doings. In fact, there's been no evidence of that reported. The younger Biden certainly tends to look shady with his documented past drug problems and his obvious attempts to leverage his family name to build what has been, to date, an unsuccessful business career. But if Joe Biden's detractors have proof of illegality or even impropriety on the president's part, they have yet to show it.

What they do have is a sinister-sounding phrase — Hunter's laptop! — that they

wield as if it's proof of something other than sound and fury designed to obfuscate a sober examination of the facts.

It does appear some documents that are part of the investigation were found on a laptop that the younger Biden left at a Delaware computer repair shop. But the existence of the laptop itself isn't especially relevant beyond its usefulness as a prop — which is how the Trump campaign used it when it sprung into the public discourse shortly before the 2020 election. And why not? They knew firsthand how well the equally irrelevant but sinister-sounding prop-phrase "Hillary's emails!" worked for them four years earlier.

If Hunter Biden is found to have broken the law, he should be convicted and punished. If there's any evidence that President Biden did anything improper, it should be revealed.

Meanwhile, it's refreshing to have a president who responds to a federal inquiry into his own circle by staying out of the way and above the fray, instead of acting like a cornered mob boss.

## 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.
- Writers are limited to one letter every 15 days.
- The writer must 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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