

Does Bend have right policy for homeless camps?

First the good news: The city of Bend is working harder than ever to find better solutions for the city's homeless.

And now for news that can be good or bad: The Bend City Council will discuss Wednesday a new city policy to remove homeless camps in or near city streets and sidewalks.

The policy is already in place. It was signed just a few days ago on May 28 by City Manager Eric King.

The policy is "intended to address health and safety concerns of both the traveling public and individuals residing or camping on city rights-of-way." Does it do that the right way? Read on and decide.

The policy acknowledges people who are homeless need places to sleep, shelter and store belongings. And in Bend, there is not adequate space in homeless shelters for everyone. So people set up where they can. In parks. In vehicles. On public property and sometimes on private property.

But "people storing items and occupying tents or other structures at ground level in the street immediately adjacent to vehicle traffic pose an increased street safety risk that is not in alignment with the policies to reduce crashes and injuries on city streets," the policy says.

Then it gets into the actual policy. It applies to rights-of-way — not other city owned property. Before

anything happens, a determination must be made by the city manager that there is an "unsafe campsite." It can be a threat to public health, safety or the environment. That could involve trash, public urination, crimes being committed, calls for service to the area, if it is near a property that serves children and more.

A 72-hour notice would be required before an unsafe campsite would be cleaned up or removed. State law, ORS 203.079, only requires 24-hour notice. No notice would be required in certain situations, such as if law enforcement officials believe illegal activities are occurring other than camping. Personal property taken from a site will be stored for a minimum of 30 days. Notice would be posted where the property was taken so it can be retrieved.

We imagine councilors may have questions about the policy. That may include how homeless camps at locations other than in rights-of-way will be handled. What do you think of the policy? Tell councilors. You can email them at council@bendoregon.gov. The key issue may not be the language of the policy but how it is used.

Legislature should pass water storage bill

Bills in the Oregon Legislature are now on a kind of death-watch. What will move and what will die?

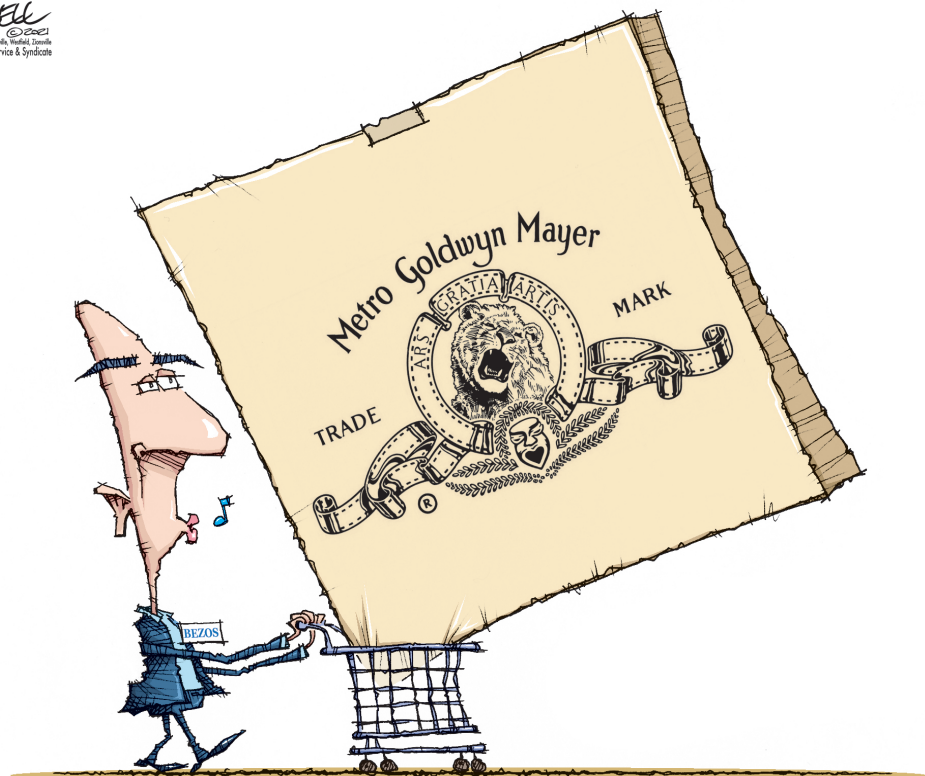
One in particular we have been tracking, House Bill 3103, remains alive. It's important because it would allow more flexibility in how water can be used. That could help the water situation in the Deschutes Basin. The bill has made it to the Legislature's budget committee, the Joint Committee on Ways and Means, meaning it could still be passed this session.

Oregon has rules about water rights — the location of where water is stored, where it is diverted and the purpose or use for the stored water. For instance, what water there is in

Wickiup Reservoir is designated for use by North Unit Irrigation District, which serves an area around Madras. Oregon's Water Resource Department has claimed it does not have the authority to permit release of the water for other uses — such as to help water habitat and the Oregon Spotted Frog. HB 3103 would clearly grant that authority.

The bill was amended to put up to nearly \$500,000 toward facilitated discussions among state stakeholders to try to reach agreement on other water disputes. Is that a lot of money for discussions? Yes. But Oregon needs more changes in its water laws. Progress will mean paddling upstream. Discussions are the place to start.

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What country will this be for grandson's family?

BY JANET WHITNEY

My grandson and his wife, who have been living and working in Europe for almost three years, are here visiting family. They are young and bright, with backgrounds in economics and health care. Ready to begin a family, the question arises of where to put down roots.

The country they currently live in provides safety and security for its citizens: child care, health care and education. Basic subsistence provides a security which frees people to make healthy life choices. Contrary to being on the dole, people there work as hard as in any country.

Foremost in our family discussions is the challenge to democracy we struggle with today in the United States. The last administration has upended our sleepy approval of ourselves and our country. The former President has put our shadow side on the table; we must now deal with our racism, painfully and honestly. As we come to grips with the reality of racism, inequality, and the myths we have perpetuated about the American dream, we are asking hard questions. Our history confirms that injus-

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ty harms both the oppressed and the oppressor. We all suffer, in a variety of ways, the consequences of bigotry and hate. Unfortunately, representatives in congress, paralyzed by fear over loss of power and wealth, make up the majority of a Senate which is able to block attempts to change direction. Their vision is small and mires us in stagnation. The elections of 2022 will tell us more about how many Americans buy into this fearful mindset.

Voter suppression is underway, an attempt to limit voter access to people of color. We are forced to put our attention on random acts of violence rather than random acts of kindness. We fail to understand that infrastructure includes people and not simply bridges and roads. And so on.

It is unclear to us and to many whether democracy will survive, and that is scary. Why would a young couple, who are lucky enough to have choice, choose to live in America? What do we offer in the way of resil-

ency and hope?

Maybe the incentive to help explore a more creative vision is enough motivation. People worldwide believe that we are a country who can do it. And maybe we can, with political will. Maybe we can grow our vision by electing more ethnically and racially diverse, informed, people to make healthy decisions for our country, decisions which offer safety, opportunity and exclude no one. Maybe we can agree that we want all our children to have safe housing and a good education.

My grandson and his wife want to raise their children among family. It is important to have the support of grandparents, aunts and uncles. Privilege allows them to act on the hopes of refugees and immigrants here and everywhere who have the same dream.

Will we act on hope and use the democratic privilege we currently have to work for causes and elect people who believe that all individuals and families in America and elsewhere deserve shelter, health care, education, and equal opportunity?

Without that, how can any of us make good choices for our children, all of whom are precious?

Janet Whitney lives in Bend.



Whitney

Letters policy

We welcome your letters. Letters should be limited to one issue, contain no more than 250 words and include the writer's signature, phone number and address for verification. We edit letters for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject poetry, personal attacks, form letters, letters submitted elsewhere and those appropriate for other sections of The Bulletin. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days.

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Your submissions should be between 550 and 650 words; they must be signed; and they must include the writer's phone number and address for verification. We edit submissions for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject those submitted elsewhere. Locally submitted columns alternate with national columnists and commentaries. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days.

How to submit

Please address your submission to either My Nickel's Worth or Guest Column and mail, fax or email it to The Bulletin. Email submissions are preferred.

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Getting carbon under control: What methods will be most effective?

BY BRENDA PACE

Editor's note: This is the second in a series of four columns over the next two months on climate change and potential legislation that may give readers information they can take action on in the effort to meet carbon emission reduction goals.

Our last column reported CO₂ at 416 ppm, a level not seen for 2.6 million years and a change of over 3% in just the last five years. (NASA Climate Vital Signs, February 2021) Nearly simultaneously, during 2020, climate events cost \$119 billion in the US alone. (NOAA.gov/billions).

Though the number is huge for a single year, it is nevertheless an underestimate that neglects the human cost of worry, work and fear of losing your home, livelihood or a person you love. Ultimately, we need action, but what government action will be the most effective?

Currently, the federal government has multiple legislative alternatives generally organized around three ideas: government expenditure, emission regulation and a carbon price. Let's look at some examples with the caveat that none of these bills are finalized.

A clear example of a government expenditure effort is President Biden's

American Jobs Plan which is a wide-ranging spending plan requiring \$2.6 trillion. Of that, \$174 billion will support a network of charging stations and electric vehicle subsidies plus another \$126 billion will provide energy efficient housing units. Since 33% of our emissions (EPA) are from transport and housing, these expenditures are relevant.

Another \$100 billion is directed to the electrical grid which will hopefully enable it to cope with increasing amounts of renewable electricity. Finally, \$62 billion will go to research and development

in climate change science and technological innovation. (Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget reporting April 2, 2021) The climate change expenditures total about \$462 billion.

Emission regulation is illustrated by Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards, which have set minimums on the fuel economy for a manufacturer's fleet.

More recently, utility emissions regulations were ordered by the Obama administration to be enforced by the EPA. Former President Donald Trump

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overruled these, however, the federal appeals court reversed again opening the way for updated rules. (KPMG Potential Legislation and Policy Changes.) A similar reinstatement for methane releases has passed the senate. GovTrack.com currently lists 124 bills that regulate emissions.

A Carbon Pricing Bill Tracker (Resources for the Future) lists 12 bills introduced in the 116th and 117th Congresses. Nearly all have set an initial price for carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions of \$15 to \$52 per metric ton and most increase that price by \$10 plus inflation per year though some rise more slowly.

The big difference among these plans is how the revenue is used. One, the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act, sends all but administrative costs equally and directly to all households. Other plans pay a smaller percentage to households or restrict the payment to income tax filers (albeit lower tax brackets) and use the remainder for a variety of purposes including worker and rural assistance, research and development, infrastructure spending, payroll tax reductions and some low-income support.

Though all these efforts will help

reduce emissions, effectiveness, which means ease of implementation and results, should be our focus. The following barely skims the surface.

The American Jobs Plan is largely directed to overcoming problems created by inequity, social infrastructure and the pandemic while only about 18% of the price tag is specifically intended to cope with carbon emissions. That \$462 billion, large as it is, is a carrot designed to enhance renewable fuel use but may not necessarily push the economy away from fossil fuels and the growth of emissions at the rate needed.

Regulations can be a spotty process targeting an industry or fuel, technology or product without fully understanding their impacts. As applied to energy producers, regulations often result in a kind of cap and trade where one company exceeding the standard can sell that benefit to others who are failing the standard.

Energy production by itself affects only about 25% of emissions without altering those created by industrial processes or design of consumer goods.

Watching CAFE standards over the years exposed the degree of enforcement required for regulatory administration and the resistance from lawsuits, lobbyist activity and downright cheating. On the scale between the carrot and the stick, regulations tend

toward the stick.

A price on carbon is essentially different because it uses dollars rather than rules to reach deeply into the linkages throughout the economy. Though the fee is applied only to the producers of fossil fuel at their source, the effect on price seeps through every exchange of every product that is bought or sold. Then, the only escape from the gradually rising price of carbon, is for all economic entities to compete for new products and services that use less.

Lucky for us, the U.S. excels at competition and innovation. Fortunate too, carbon pricing cause little governmental administrative fuss because revenues only involve producers and expenditures only involve households.

Is there a blend that would be the most effective in our situation?

Ideally, each method would be designed to perform what it does best. After all, we don't have time to waste on imperfect decision making. The Mauna Loa Global Monitoring Laboratory just reported a preliminary finding of 419 ppm for April, a bit higher than the February NASA estimate. More about decision-making in the next column.

Brenda Pace is retired from Pace Research Co., a regional economics consultancy, and the Center for Natural Lands Management, a habitat management nonprofit for endangered species responsible for more than 75,000 acres.



Pace

