

## EDITORIALS &amp; OPINIONS

The Bulletin  
AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPERHeidi Wright Publisher  
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## Legislators dropped option to require greener homes

No matter what side you are on going green, there is something to like about the Oregon Reach Code.

It's a building code for homes requiring more energy efficiency. That greater efficiency can save homeowners money in the long run and be better for the environment.

But if you don't like the Oregon Reach Code, you don't have to follow it. It's optional.

That's still true today, though, it may not be optional in the future. There was a move in the legislative session that just ended to put more teeth in the Reach Code. House Bill 2398 would have enabled cities to adopt the Reach Code for their communities. It wouldn't require all cities to do it. City governments could do it if they chose to.

Sally Russell, mayor of Bend, testified for the bill. "Stronger energy efficiency standards in the building code are one of the most powerful tools we have for mitigating and reducing emissions," which is especially important in Bend because of all the new construction.

The Environmental Center of Bend testified for it. And Amy Warren, the director of the Kór Community Land Trust in Bend, which builds affordable housing, also testified in favor.

She made the argument that Kór is able to build homes of significantly greater efficiency than re-

quired by the Reach Code and also manage to keep them affordable. Many other cities testified for the bill, as well.

Groups of contractors and builders and NW Natural, the gas company, fought it.

They argued it imperiled the uniformity of state building code.

They argued there was nothing stopping builders from using the code. They argued Oregon's building code is already a green leader in the nation.

Why exactly the bill died is, well, not completely clear to us. It was stuck in the House Ways and Means Committee at the end of the session. It may have been sacrificed as part of a deal to get other environmental bills passed.

For instance, House Bill 2021 sets new state targets for overall reductions in greenhouse gases by electricity providers.

The failure of the bill is a lost opportunity to save energy and money in communities that would have gone on to adopt the Reach Code. But it is still out there. Homebuyers will have to hunt for homes built to the standards they want. For many, and in this housing market, that means they will have to take what they can get.

## Should health workers be required to get vaccinated?

Oregon has a seeming contradiction in its laws for immunizations.

Your employer can likely require you to get vaccinated for COVID-19. Employers of health care workers can't require that health care workers get vaccinated. That's the law.

Oregon Revised Statute 433.416 says that employers of health care workers must provide preventive immunizations to those workers at no cost. But then it goes on to say: "A worker shall not be required as a condition of work to be immunized under this section, unless such immunization is otherwise required by federal or state law, rule or regulation."

Now that's just strange. On the front lines of the pandemic, health care workers didn't have to be vaccinated for COVID-19. Doesn't that put patients at greater risk? Yes. Shouldn't the Legislature have done something about that?

The state is just shy of a 70% vaccination rate and the COVID-19 re-

strictions are, for the most part, over. St. Charles Health System told us Thursday 75% of its 4,668 caregivers are vaccinated for COVID-19. Better than the general population.

We hate to even think about it, but this won't be the last pandemic. And it shouldn't take a pandemic to think about changing the law. People in the hospital are vulnerable. A flu vaccination for a health care worker can help ensure people don't get sick.

Former state Sen. Laurie Monnes Anderson, D-Gresham, made a pass at changing the law in 2012, aiming to require unvaccinated health care workers to sign a form stating why they did not get vaccinated. But the law is still essentially what it was in 1989. As Willamette Week reported: "No bill to reverse the 1989 law was introduced in the last legislative session."

Should Oregon change the law? Or if health care workers get that treatment under Oregon law, should other Oregonians get that same choice?



## My Nickel's Worth

## Bend should do more on fireworks

After hearing that COCC-Redmond and Redmond Airport had closed due to smoke from wildfires, I had reason to visit Safeway, 27th Street, Bend, where I came face to face with a mound of fireworks. I spoke to the store manager and expressed my shock and disbelief that they were being sold there. I asked why. He told me that it was because they had not been told not to. He knew of the city of Bend ban on the use of fireworks, but that it had not banned the sale of them, as well. The pile was covered in signs telling customers to not smoke close to the pile. I suggested that it might be of more use to put up a sign telling customers of the \$750 fine if they use them before July 9.

On my way home, I passed two more tents selling fireworks in parking lots. Do the retailers, City Council and charities who use the sale of fireworks to raise money, not understand what is at risk here? We have been under an extreme heat advisory for days — it will not end soon. Why has the city come up with the arbitrary date of July 9 for the "safe" use of fireworks? Will Bend suddenly be soggy and damp?

As much as I enjoy the display on Pilot Butte, and am reassured that safety protocols are in place, I think that it should be canceled to set an ex-

ample to residents. (Ashland has canceled its show.) Please help me raise awareness of the contrariness of the city's announcement. There are examples of Oregon cities that have banned the sale and use of fireworks. Ashland is one.

I urge all residents concerned for their safety and that of their neighbors to contact Bend City Council at council@bendoregon.gov

—Pauline Wilson, Bend

## Not so fast on pump your own

Hello, if you think pumping your own gas will lead to lower gas prices, then all you need do is check out California. Isn't going to happen.

What pumping your own gas will do is put many many gas station attendants out of work and increase the revenue of the gas station owners.

As a "seasoned" citizen, I appreciate having my gas pumped. Especially in cold wet weather or when it's 90-plus degrees out.

As for liquor, I'll not weigh in on that, since I don't use the stuff, but I'm fairly sure that Oregon has a real purpose in maintaining state-controlled liquor stores. Even if it's only for the revenue.

—Diana Hopson, Redmond

## Use caution with 'net zero'

Lately, we have seen an uptick in

global warming articles and editorials addressing emissions (primarily CO2). Most authors use the term "net zero" to imply that all will be well if we could only reach that goal. Somehow, the general public is supposed to feel that natural fuels (all those that burn) will disappear or, at least, be very substantially reduced.

Since natural fuels will be continuously used in cargo transport by truck, train or ship, as well as air and sea human transport, the reduction in generated CO2 will be much less than wished for. So what do we do to make this rate of CO2 generation become "net zero"?

Just to divert a little: "Net zero" in science and mathematics means just that. The sums of all quantities added together equals zero. However, when the term is associated with "global warming," it has an entirely different meaning.

What it really says is that while CO2 is continuously generated, we will somehow figure out how to remove it. The term "sequestration" was resurrected to solve this problem. So as long as the "environmentalists" throw this term around with abandon, the problem is solved. Everyone is happy.

One problem, however, remains. Nobody knows how to accomplish this task with any sort of functional or economic efficiency.

—Jay Feinsten, Bend

## Letters policy

We welcome your letters. Letters should be limited to one issue, contain no more than 250 words and include the writer's 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.

## Guest columns

Your submissions should be between 550 and 650 words and 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.

Email: letters@bendbulletin.com

Write: My Nickel's Worth/Guest Column  
P.O. Box 6020  
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Fax: 541-385-5804

Editorials reflect the views of The Bulletin's editorial board, Publisher Heidi Wright, Editor Gerry O'Brien and Editorial Page Editor Richard Coe. They are written by Richard Coe.

## Humans caused climate change, fire severity and the heat dome

BY JAMES COLLINS

By my count, the print edition of the June 30 Bulletin featured six stories that addressed various impacts of climate change, including the abnormally early start to our wildfire season and the unprecedented, deadly heat event upon us here in the Pacific Northwest. I was heartened to see that the paper's lead story — at least as it appeared in the print edition — made clear the explicit link between weather events such as this deadly heat dome, increased fire severity and human-caused climate change.

The present events leave those of us in the scientific and emergency response communities with virtually no doubt that the human release of fossil fuels into the atmosphere has helped bring about these events, and that the changes hu-

manity has caused are making heat events, fires, hurricanes, and floods more extreme, and more dangerous. Unfortunately, several national media outlets reporting on the "heat dome" this week failed to acknowledge these causal linkages, even in passing.



Collins

Instead, many of these stories and their accompanying photographs — including a locally focused story here in that recent Bulletin — framed the event for readers as just another unpleasant bout of heat whose effects might be mitigated by the consumption of shave ice or a refreshing float down a river. In The Bulletin's case, the paper's other reporting did provide the missing scientific context for readers of the print edition; unfortunately, those who consume their news online might very well have read only the local arti-

cle, which did not mention climate change.

## GUEST COLUMN

The context is critical because the reality is stark: We should be facing these agonizing days as a horrifying and sobering harbinger of far worse things to come in our very near future.

Human-caused climate change has raised average temperatures across the Pacific Northwest by nearly 2 degrees Fahrenheit over the past century, and made nearly all forms of extreme weather more likely. The High Desert region southeast of Bend that encompasses Lake and Harney counties has seen even more extreme change: Average temperatures there have risen between 3.8 and 3.9 degrees Fahrenheit since 1895, making it one of the top 10 fastest warming regions in North America.

These events and trends will continue to cost society billions of dollars in property and infrastructure damage and cause human death and suffering. In addition, we can expect the disruption of complex ecological and geochemical systems that provide us with critical services such as water for drinking and irrigation.

As an MIT-trained oceanographer and earth system scientist, military veteran, and certified Incident Commander serving in the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve, I grapple with these realities throughout the globe and Western Hemisphere as a climate expert and as a first responder to hurricanes and other natural disasters. As a father, husband and resident of Bend, I face these consequences here personally in the High Desert alongside all of The Bulletin's readers.

There is some time left to mitigate the worst possible consequences of our fossil fuel addiction. Some of the best minds in the world are work-

ing on nature-based and engineered solutions that might help us reduce and then eliminate our reliance on oil, coal and natural gas — all while trying to remove from the atmosphere and oceans some of the carbon dioxide we have emitted.

But make no mistake: We are grappling with an existential threat to our planet and society whose consequences are deadly serious. Apart from perhaps only nuclear holocaust, climate change is the most significant and all-encompassing threat we have ever faced.

Media have a duty to report on the present weather in this awful and serious context so there can be no doubt, excuses or dangerous climate denialism in the minds of readers and viewers. I was heartened to see that The Bulletin continues to take this duty seriously.

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■ Jamie Collins, Ph.D., is a climate scientist, an oceanographer and president of Summit to Sea Solutions. He lives in Bend.