

## EDITORIALS &amp; OPINIONS

The Bulletin  
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## New rules coming for landowners to reduce wildfire risk

Don't wait before making your home safer from wildfire. Do it now. Live on the outskirts of town? Do it now. Do your roof vents have big holes where a drifting spark can sneak in? Do it now.

Gutters filled with pine needles? Clean them out. Do it now.

Central Oregon is wildfire country. This year it's dry. Last year it was dry. There's likely to be more dry years and higher temperatures coming. You don't have to look far to the south to know the devastation of wildfire: the Bootleg Fire. You don't have to look back far in Oregon's history to know wildfires can raze a town — last year 4,000 homes were burned. We would all be foolish to think that it just can't happen here.

So build a defensible space. If you are not sure what to do, call your fire department. They know what to do. State officials are working on creating rules that may mandate more Oregon landowners do more. Senate Bill 762 is the driver. It's just waiting for Gov. Kate Brown's signature. There's every reason to believe she will sign it.

As it was introduced, it was a bill to study wildfire recovery and response. It was amended to have teeth. It requires utilities to have plans so that the state's electrical system is more wildfire resilient. It also requires the state work with Oregon State University to redo the map of state wildfire risk with five categories — no risk, low, moderate, high and extreme. The State Fire Marshal will establish minimum defensible space standards. And local governments could even be more strict.

What is that going to mean for you? Well if you live in the middle of Bend, it might not mean much. But if you live on the edge of town or in a more rural area, new mandates are likely coming. We can't say exactly what they will be because they are being worked on — including in meetings next week. Ed Keith, Deschutes County forester, said there could be rules for the types of permitted roofs, siding and vents and also rules about clearing vegetation within a certain distance of a home. Once again, though, no rules have been set yet.

Tim Holschbach, Deputy Chief of Policy and Planning for the Oregon Department of Forestry, told us the plan is to include an appeals process of some sort if a landowner believes a property's wildfire is misclassified. And once the maps are drawn and the risk categories are set, landowners will be notified about the state's new policy.

You could just wait for the new rules to come. But remember back to the Camp Fire that raced through Paradise, California. Residents literally had to run for their lives, sneaker soles melting on pavement. Have a plan for your family to leave quickly.

And get out now and create the defensible space to increase the chances you will have a home to come home to. Do it now.

## The carbon targets that may become mandates

Rather than gazing into a crystal ball or throwing bones, if you want to know what sort of climate change policies are coming to Oregon, you can watch the state's Global Warming Commission. It is a body appointed by the governor and makes recommendations to help the state prepare for climate change.

There isn't a one-for-one, letter-for-letter translation from the recommendations of the commission into bills by the state Legislature. Consider this, though, the goals the commission talked about in 2011 have in many cases morphed into mandates.

Next week, the commission is scheduled to meet to discuss goals for Oregon to sequester more carbon in forest, farms and rangelands. It could be planting more trees in cities and reforesting other areas. It

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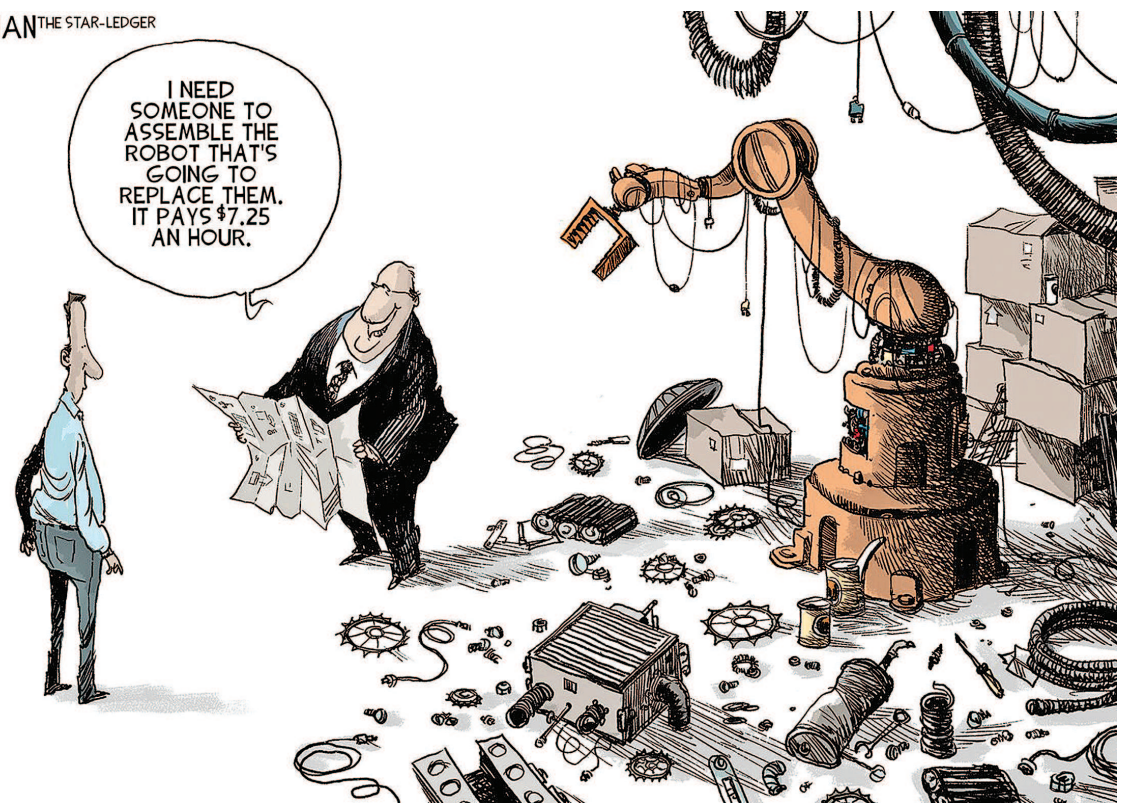
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could be different farm practices to enhance soil productivity and keep moisture in.

That will take money, research and incentives. And to be clear, the commission is talking about goals and incentives, not rules and mandates.

If you are curious enough to get involved, the commission meeting on Aug. 4 will be livestreamed starting at 1 p.m. There is more information here: [tinyurl.com/Oregonwarming](http://tinyurl.com/Oregonwarming).

SHENEMAN THE STAR-LEDGER



## My Nickel's Worth

## Keeping cool

Why are all agencies reporting on deaths from our recent extreme wave, but nobody is spreading the word about an easy and cheap way to avoid dying in your apartment?

Just run a cold water bath, jump in and instant relief! It works best if you dress in cotton clothing, which when wet will provide the best evaporation cooling.

Most of the dead were seniors living alone in an apartment without air conditioning; this simple trick — with some kind of bulletin provided by social workers and announced continuously in all news broadcasts — could have made a difference.

If you are reluctant to sit in cold water, several cold (or cool) showers also help — again, wearing cotton clothing will increase the evaporation which cools the body. For homeless people, unable to get into the Deschutes River, perhaps plastic kiddie wading pools, filled by a water truck would have helped.

I saw no mention of this simple life-saving trick on any local or statewide media. Call the governor. Spread the word. We'll likely see extreme heat again as global warming increases.

I first learned of this trick on an old cop show, "Hill Street Blues." I knew that jumping into a river would be cooling, but not everyone can access a river. Also, every summer, dozens of people drown while swimming. It's hard to drown in your bathtub.

— Melinda Law, Crooked River Ranch

## Opportunity, not equity

Equity sounds good, but it is not equality. Equity is the call to redi-

tribute assets to those who have not worked, or do not deserve them.

How does going to school for six or eight years to become a doctor sound while incurring \$200,000 in debt and then being told you must give up your salary to others who deserve it based on the past injustices of their ancestors?

Sound ridiculous? Because it is. Let's scrap this division tactic and get back to equal opportunity for all.

— Jody Prusi, Bend

## Bentz is off target on wildfires

Our Rep. Cliff Bentz has words of wisdom for us about the tragic wildfire losses we are suffering in our state.

"People tend to blame climate change," he says, but the "true cause" is the "amount of wood." Partisan blaming of someone else's policies indeed tends to be much easier than addressing climate change or the multiple factors that scientific analysis can give us.

According to Bryant Baker, conservation director of nonprofit Los Padres ForestWatch, "a history of commercial logging, thinning, clear cutting, prescribed fire and other intensive management practices contributed to the Bootleg Fire's spread." Baker does real-time geographic information system analysis of how landscapes were historically managed while wildfires are actively burning on the land. "I do think this demonstrates that this kind of focus on removing vegetation from these wildlands, especially far away from human communities, is not doing anything to prevent these fires from becoming very large," he says.

Timothy Ingalsbee, executive director of Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics and Ecology, says that "past

commercial logging and livestock grazing has encouraged wildfires," and notes that "when the fire entered the Gearhart Mountain Wilderness, an area with more potential fuel but fewer small trees and flammable grasses, it appears to have burned more slowly."

There will be more expert opinions to come, but please, Rep. Bentz, can we use the lens of science to show leadership and to develop solutions to prevent disasters? And can we spend less time trying to run from the real issues?

— Jean Sullivan Carlton, Bend

## The enemy is us

I enjoyed The Bulletin's delightful coverage of Dick Higgins' 100th birthday. As Bend's Pearl Harbor survivor, he reminds us of a very different time. People in Dick Higgins' era recognized the existential danger and accepted the mission regardless of the sacrifice.

An article on the inside page spoke to a projected surge of the coronavirus. While the author seemed intent on denigrating our governor, I came away with that old line ringing in my head, "We have met the enemy, and it is us."

Doesn't it seem like this pandemic is the critical challenge of our day? Pick whatever excuse we think justifies our refusal to get vaccinated, to wear masks, to socially distance, it all boils down to our inability to set aside our individual differences or preferences for the common good. Each of us has a choice, of course, and our collective future doesn't look that bright. How sad!

— Robert Currie, Bend

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.

## 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](mailto:letters@bendbulletin.com)

Write: My Nickel's Worth/Guest Column  
P.O. Box 6020  
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## Don't even think of passing Biden's budget bill now

BY MICHAEL R. STRAIN  
Bloomberg

As the delta variant continues to sweep through the U.S., officials are reimposing mask mandates and taking other measures to try to slow the spread. Will the renewed threat to public health stall U.S. economic growth?

I don't think it will. But the possibility that it could is another reason for Congress not to ram through President Joe Biden's \$3.5 trillion budget proposal, which includes spending on social programs, education, health care, families and the environment. This plan would be on top of the \$550 billion bipartisan infrastructure package that the Senate agreed to advance on Wednesday night.

The U.S. economy is booming, and the delta variant likely won't change that. While the U.S. is experiencing a surge in COVID-19 cases, the fatality rate will likely become similar to the toll for the seasonal flu, since the

vaccination rates among the elderly and vulnerable are very high. This, in turn, will lessen its economic impact by reducing public concern about falling seriously ill and making it unlikely that state and local governments will revive restrictions on business activity.

Moreover, people who have chosen not to be vaccinated are probably less likely to change their everyday behavior due to the delta variant's prevalence.

Since the shots are broadly effective against it, many of those who have been vaccinated will try to carry on with normal life as much as possible. Mask mandates, which could affect both groups, won't have a big effect on the economy.

The experience of the U.K. seems to confirm this optimism. The variant's spread in the U.S. is a few weeks behind the U.K., where spending and economic activity are holding up.

This is not to say that the surging variant poses no threat to the econ-

omy. Children still can't get vaccinated and likely won't be able to for several months. If school districts temporarily switch to remote learning due to outbreaks this fall, then it will be difficult for many parents to go to work.

The rare cases in which vaccinated people become seriously ill might receive more attention than they deserve, alarming many people and prompting governments in some blue states and cities to reimpose some limited restrictions on business activity.

While I don't think these threats will change the economy's trajectory, what if I'm wrong and damage to the economy does materialize? In that event, Congress may need to step in again with an economic relief and stimulus bill.

Because of this possibility, Congress should keep its powder dry this summer until there's more clarity on what help, if any, is needed. Biden might not have the political capital for an-

other pandemic relief law this fall if Congress goes forward with his \$3.5 trillion spending bill next month.

The details of the package are still being worked out, but the outlines are known. Some components would provide support against another pandemic hit to the economy. For example, extra income to households would boost demand. An analysis by Moody's Analytics estimates that in 2022 the assistance would provide around \$94 billion in tax credits to families with children and about \$15 billion in nutrition and housing assistance to low-income families.

But most of the spending — tax incentives for clean energy, more funding for community colleges and Medicare, universal pre-kindergarten, provisions for a new paid family and medical leave program — is poorly designed to help in the face of a pandemic-related economic slowdown.

In the more likely event that the economy continues to boom during

the delta-variant surge, the extra cash to households and spending on social programs would needlessly worsen inflationary pressures. This would put the longevity of the recovery at risk if the Federal Reserve is forced to attend to inflation and ends up withdrawing support for the economy prematurely.

Passing the \$3.5 trillion package next month along partisan lines would be a lose-lose proposition. If the delta variant only dents the economy, then the spending would elevate inflation risk.

And in the unlikely event that it leads to restrictions on economic activity in some areas of the country, Biden wouldn't have the political capital he would need to adequately respond. The president needs to adjust his plans until we see what happens in the fall.

■ Michael R. Strain is a Bloomberg columnist. He is director of economic policy studies and Arthur F. Burns Scholar in Political Economy at the American Enterprise Institute.