

EDITORIALS & OPINIONS

The Bulletin
AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

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Would tax incentives be worth it for areas of downtown Bend?

A tax incentive is like the government waving a flag saying: Please, come here.

The quandary is always in deciding when it is worth waving that flag — what should the government promote, if anything? Government must also decide how high and hard to wave the flag. A small incentive and nobody will be interested. Too large an incentive and people may feel like the government is giving away too much. And then the question will be: Does it work?

The city of Bend is trying to make those kinds of decisions about a few different tax incentives that might be put into place for some parts of downtown and elsewhere. One is called a multiple unit property tax exemption or MUPTE.

Think about the Starbucks on Third Street. We are using that as an example not to pick on it. City staff repeatedly referred to it as an example.

If you remember, before the Starbucks was there at Third Street and Northeast Lafayette Avenue, it was the home of the Platypus Pub, a brewpub built in an old church. Some people didn't like it much that the building was being torn down. Didn't like it because the future tenant would be Starbucks. Didn't like it because there would be a drive-thru.

And they didn't like it because it would not be a multi-story, multi-use building, instead. Multi-story, multi-use was permitted under the code. Bend planners and some people in the community have a vision for that area that is multi-story buildings with perhaps commercial on the bottom and offices and apartments above. They want it to be a walkable, bikeable mixed-use community. In a city with limits on space, in a state with limits on how much cities can grow, in a time when people are worried about climate change, you can see why they want that — even if it's not your chosen brew.

Public should be able to see business task force at work

Gov. Kate Brown did not achieve one of her top priorities: She didn't land Intel's expansion for Oregon.

It went to Ohio. That's \$20 billion in investment and 3,000 hired to build two new, high-tech factories going to Ohio, not Oregon.

In The Oregonian's reporting, we found this intriguing sentence about what Brown did and didn't do to lure chip manufacturers: "While her office suggested a number of measures to lure chipmakers, though — including a 'need to evaluate the land use grand bargain' — Brown did not make any public proposals her staff suggested for the chip industry."

So how does the city encourage developers to get the type of growth it wants? It could try a tax incentive. A MUPTE.

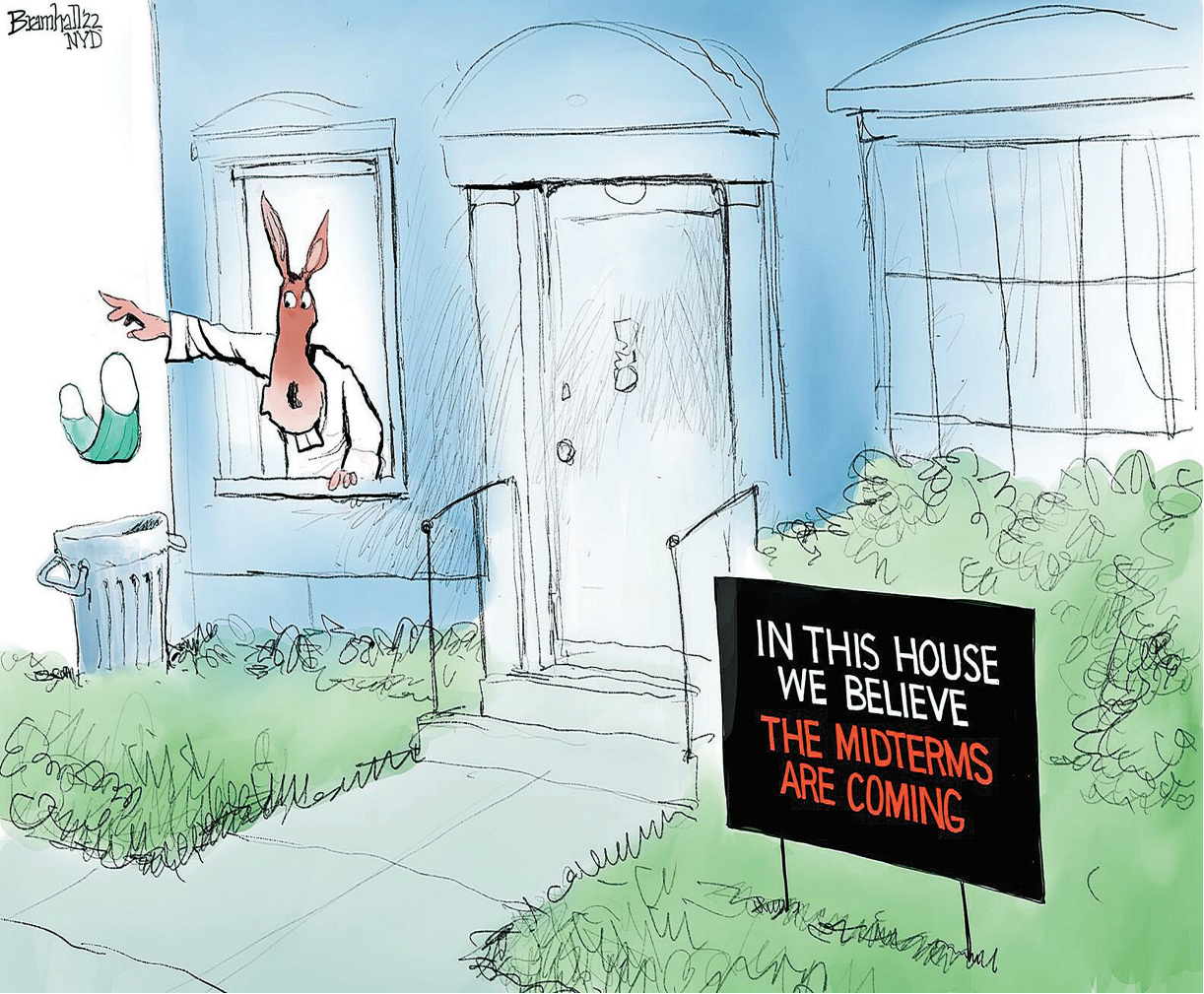
For instance, the city could offer a MUPTE for projects that fit its desired multi-story vision. The city would still collect taxes on the land, just not on any building for 10 years. That property tax exemption could range right on up to 100%. Is it the right thing to do? How much should the exemption be? And would it work?

We don't know. City staff said a MUPTE might work on the margins to help the city achieve some other goals. It might not be enough to get some multi-story buildings. Those other goals include things such as affordable housing, greener building construction, better stormwater management or electric car charging stations.

"What we are hearing from developers is that this exemption program, is not going to make or break the difference between a single-story commercial development to a five-story, mixed-use building," said Allison Platt, the city's core area project manager. "The cost difference of building those two types of development is much higher than the exemptions that we are considering at this time.

But it could have a significant impact on the types of public benefits we are able to leverage from some of these developments, whether a higher percentage of their units are dedicated to deed-restricted affordable housing or energy efficiency upgrades than they would consider if there were not an exemption in place."

The city is still developing what a MUPTE might look like. It has some other tax incentives it is working on, as well. You can tell councilors what you think the city should do at council@bendoregon.gov.



Eulogy for the once Grand Old Party

BY WILLIAM BARRON

The party of Lincoln, T. Roosevelt, Eisenhower, Reagan, Bush, Goldwater, and McCain has now ceased to exist as they would recognize. The party of the moral majority has lost not only its moral compass but also its moral fiber to withstand internal radicalization. A party which professes the legitimacy of the Big Lie, promotes rioters as patriots, and sponsors voter suppression rather than voter outreach as the means to win elections. A party which condemns independence of individuals and solicits funds to help pay the legal fees of the corrupt. And which now, declares violence and vandalism as "legitimate political discourse". A stance which will probably come back to haunt them.

A party which now supports, condones, and defends violence over dialog to resolve differences. A position which might be the first steps in justifying clashes and civil violence in the future. A party which once proudly proclaimed and encouraged more voices leads to better policy and decision-making now censures independent thought and supports the rule of the mob. A party now firmly tethered, like mindless puppets, to a master who cares more about revenge and retaliation than the wellbeing of the country.

The party which once proudly bore the banner of global leadership and defense of democracy is now the Party of isolation and censorship. The party which once was the stalwart against authoritarian communist gov-

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cur losses, for themselves. A party disconnected from normal decorum and reality, making history by being on the wrong side of history.

The center pole of Reagan's 'big tent' has been kicked down and now the party believes the only way to win elections is to suppress voting rather than have winning, long term policy proposals. It is now a party controlled by the 'retro-gressives', those far right of 'regressive', who only want to stymie progress and return to the sanctity of their past. A party whose vocal members have become intoxicated by fear and anger and control by the voice of the mob.

A party whose leaders were once the best and brightest with bold ideas and ideals now tremble and lack the moral fortitude to standup for themselves and the historic principles of the party. Trembling in fear of retribution and pandering to the mob to retain their power rather than expressing what they know are truths. It is far easier to continue to tell a lie rather than face the wrath of those consumed by the lie. These are the times when a lie is not a lie if a person has the audacity to keep asserting the lie is true to a gullible audience.

And who am I? I'm a small government, fiscal conservative, social moderate who had been a registered Republican for 45 years. I now find myself disenfranchised by radicals from within and am witnessing the agonizing death of the Republican Party and earnestly hope it doesn't take the country down as well.

■ William Barron lives in 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
Bend, OR 97708

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.

Oregon needs climate action now to protect environment, economy

BY KURT SCHRADER

Oregonians saw millions of acres of our forests go up in smoke in 2020. In my district, the Beachie Creek Fire engulfed 193,500 acres, destroying farms and homes families had lived in for decades. The skies were thick with black smoke for weeks.

That was the worst summer I had ever seen—until last year. Most of us will never forget the devastating heat waves that struck across our state, killing nearly a hundred Oregonians after temperatures topped 116 degrees, the highest we have ever recorded. Fires also raged for weeks, producing more smoke. We lost more loved ones, and homes and livelihoods were destroyed.

Oregonians are feeling these real costs and consequences of climate change every day. From 2010 to 2020, our state experienced 12 extreme weather events, costing us \$5 billion in damages. This proves we must act and finally address this growing threat.

Wildfire mitigation has long been a priority for me. For instance, my legislation, the Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act, helped the Forest Service and power companies streamline the process to remove hazardous trees to boost the electricity grid's reliability and help reduce the threat of wildfires. I also worked with Senator Wyden to allow responsible fuels thinning and facilitate prescribed burns, and to increase the



Schrader

san law makes historic investments in transportation, water and broadband. It also makes significant investments in climate-caused catastrophic wildfire management and the largest-ever contribution toward energy transmission and electric vehicle development.

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funding for wildfire response. And most recently, I led the charge in Congress to pass the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law which makes important strides in tackling the climate crisis. This bipartisan law makes historic investments in transportation, water and broadband. It also makes significant investments in climate-caused catastrophic wildfire management and the largest-ever contribution toward energy transmission and electric vehicle development.

This is the biggest investment in the nation's future in decades, and it will create millions of good-paying, family-wage jobs.

Climate action is vital to preventing extreme weather events and mitigating their effects. This is one of the core reasons I supported the Build Back Better Act, which is the largest effort to combat climate change in American history. It invests \$555 billion in renewable and clean energy initiatives, including electric vehicle expansion, building new clean energy transmission and creating more energy-efficient homes and businesses, which will save the average family \$500 a year on their energy bills. Unfortunately, the Build Back Better package is stalled in the Senate over

disagreements on individual pieces, but I remain confident we can find a solution that builds off the powerful foundation the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law lays out. Together, we can make America a global clean energy leader, cut pollution fueling the climate crisis and avoid a growing disaster, all while boosting our economy, creating jobs and putting real money back in Oregonians' pockets.

Congress must come together to deliver a transformational climate bill in addition to the historic infrastructure investments we've already enacted to protect our environment and our economy. I am committed to being a leader in this fight because the future of Oregon and our planet depends on it.