

# Continuing saga bodes ill for governor, first lady

The saga of Gov. John Kitzhaber and Cylvia Hayes continues to unfold much like an old-fashioned disaster flick – one that doesn't seem likely to have a happy ending for the stars of the show.

The latest indications that things are going very, very wrong for the pair came this week, when news reports revealed:

- Hayes hired a criminal defense lawyer to represent her, as questions mount about her consulting income and tax filings.

- The governor asked the Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum to do an “independent factual review” of the allegations facing the couple – only to be told she was already on it.

Amid these developments came the astonishing assertion by the Kitzhaber and Hayes camp that she is not a public official, and thus the Oregon Government Ethics Commission has no jurisdiction over her.

That's got “dodge” written all over it. This claim may work, at least temporarily, by delaying the release of some of Hayes' records and complicating the various investigations in progress. Ron Bersin, the Ethics Commission executive director, told oregonlive.com that his office's review of actions by Kitzhaber and Hayes may have to be put on hold if the state has a criminal investigation under way.

But it still plays like a dodge.

From a practical standpoint, the private citizen claim just doesn't fly. It doesn't take a government salary to meet the definition of public official.

In addition, until now, Kitzhaber has been promoting, even showcasing Hayes as Oregon's first lady. That's a title that generally garners a certain amount of stature and respect, and the record indicates she hasn't been shy about claiming that dividend.

As first lady, Hayes has had use of an office and Mahonia Hall, the governor's mansion. She's been featured on a page of the governor's website and given speeches with Kitzhaber and on her own at various events. She's even directed public employees to do her bidding – from taking care of her cat to making travel arrangements. How many plain ol' private citizens get those perks?

It's hard to tell if this new strategy stems from arrogance, obliviousness or bad advice, or a little of each. Whatever the source, it shows a disdain for the public's intelligence. And that doesn't bode well for Kitzhaber's fourth term. It's barely begun and already, he faces calls for his resignation and two recall movements.

The public, meanwhile, has every right to wonder how well the state's business will be conducted with such a high level of distraction at the top.

We suspect that when this political drama comes to a close, the only happy faces will be those of the lawyers.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Let's coordinate

**To the Editor:**

I'd like to recognize the county commissioners from Baker and Wallowa Counties for sticking up for their citizens and rejecting the Forest Service's attempt at getting them to sign a cooperation agreement trading their rights just for a seat at the table.

I hope the rest of the counties that are involved in the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision will take a hard look at what the two above counties have done to protect the rights of the county. Ask your commissioners to give the Baker and Wallowa County Commissioners a call and find out why they made the stand that they did.

People concerned about losing their roads need to call or email their respective commissioners and ask about just where they intend to take the county. If it is anything but “coordination,” get ready for a big loss of roads in your county.

It is crunch time – We either stand our ground or lose a major portion of your roads and trails access. Be proactive and go to the commissioners' meetings, make an appointment with them, email or text them. The Tribes said it all, no cooperation for them; it is government to government using coordination. Why not us? Don't we deserve the same as the Tribes?

**Chuck Chase**  
Baker City

### Vets have rights, too

**To the Editor:**

When I was 19 my country gave me a used M14 and quite a bit of ammunition free and they even gave me \$55 extra a month to shoot at some people. Just in case, they gave me a foot-long knife to attach to the end of my rifle barrel.

I survived and came home, and now I go to the Veteran's hospital in Boise for medical treatment.

Things have changed. Evidently some people I suspect were not veterans wrote some laws; one of them is in great big letters as I enter the VA grounds, promising a year in jail should I possess a weapon. The practical effect is that even though I am a veteran and a noncriminal, I have to travel 168 miles one way unarmed because my final destination is the VA.

Inside are some more signs: “for your protection no guns or knives are allowed.”

How the world has changed. Combat veterans remember relying on guns and knives for protection and would like to have one in our personal cars instead of relying on leftist signs.

I mentioned this to Rep. Greg Walden in one of his town meetings; he took notes but I am still waiting to see if does any good to elect a Republican when it comes to rolling back the liberal gun agenda. It sure would be nice to see some pushback in Oregon when Ginny Burdick drops five or six gun bills in the Legislature but Oregon's law-making body is decidedly short of any veteran perspective.

I would like to see a “Veteran's Second Amendment Restoration

Act” introduced in this Congress and become an issue during the 2016 election cycle. It probably won't get a lot of traction, until ISIS shows the left wing that you can be attacked here, right in your shopping malls and maybe even at a VA hospital. The idea that those who fought them over there might be attacked here for revenge is not inconceivable. And like they say, “When seconds count, the police are only minutes away.”

**Steve Culley**  
Richland

### Rebels take stand

**To the Editor:**

My father stood on the beach at Normandy with fellow Americans who spilled their blood and gave their lives for our nation and our freedoms. A “grateful nation” has since forgotten those who fought and died to protect our citizens from falling under a dictatorship or worse.

That nation has now given over our rights to the narrow vision of an entity of their own making whose dedicated efforts are to curtail our freedoms. Specifically access to the lands our fathers fought, bled, and died for. It is also apparent that this “entity” has lured many elected officials, moneyed individuals, and anyone they could romance away from their values and patriotism we once admired them for.

Those battling to regain control of our freedoms are labeled as “rebel rousers” and are wrongly being demeaned for their effort in behalf of our citizens. Rebels they may be because they refuse to sit back and watch a raft of fanatical Napoleonic twits reduce our forest access to “designated” routes.

We have sat back too long and the “entity” has grown deep roots in our county without our united stand against them. We have the opportunity to stand up now by writing to the Grant County Court, letters to the editor, public officials, or your neighbors demanding our rights be given back to the people.

**Judy Kerr**  
Canyon City

### Let's talk, not snipe

**To the Editor:**

Regarding the on-going road closure debate failure: I have 40 years of expertise designing sustainable national forest roads. I find the antics and posturing between sheriff, Grant County Court and a local no-road closure group of private citizens humorous.

Reminds me of two or three bull elk trying to push their weight around. It may impress the elk ladies; but this belligerent style does nothing to further long-term goals.

This three-ring circus has created a destructive turkey-shoot atmosphere: the problem is who is a fault?

Nicky Sprauve's column, “To achieve forest goals hold officials accountable,” Jan. 28, seems to fault our elected county officials for troubles on the road closure front lines. Access board member Jim Sproul says we are the ones at fault, as stakeholders – “and it got this bad because we let it.”

Frankly, I find this fault-finding a waste of energy, like shoveling fireplace smoke.

Let's solve it instead!

Grant County citizens can and must seriously and calmly discuss their concerns about national forest road closures, and Malheur National Forest Supervisor Steve Beverlin seems ready to have a friendly discussion or hearing with all concerned, local forest landowners and recreationists. He is a paid professional problem solver.

Cliffs and landslides are good reasons for closing a road; so are elk calving areas, and culturally special historical sites are another legitimate scientific reason to close a forest road.

Economics, also, can cause road closures; we can't pave or blade every gravel right away in Oregon.

Where is the happy spot of compromise? Name-calling won't find it!

County Commissioner Boyd Britton states in the Jan. 28 “Future of the Forest” article: “I think we really plowed through some new ground. We have the opportunity to have a really, really big time impact on our Plan.”

Our grandkids will be proud of us if we keep the forests open for business and outdoor recreation for future generations.

Tomorrow is a new day; wouldn't it be great to be friends of Malheur National Forest instead of an enemy?

No more snipe hunting with out a license!

**Dave Sandersfeld**  
Canyon City

### Oppose covert tax

**To the Editor:**

One of the first public hearings of the Oregon Legislature's 2015 session was for Senate Bill 324, which extends the sunset for a low carbon fuel standards (LCFS) program set to expire Dec. 31.

The alleged purpose of LCFS is to reduce the “carbon intensity” of fossil fuels. Producers of biofuels will be given “carbon intensity credits” for their production of “renewable” energy products. Suppliers of gasoline and diesel will be forced to purchase these “carbon intensity credits” to “mitigate” their carbon dioxide emissions.

The Department of Environmental Quality estimates this will increase the price of gasoline by about 19 cents per gallon. Consumer user groups are estimating costs to be closer to \$1 per gallon.

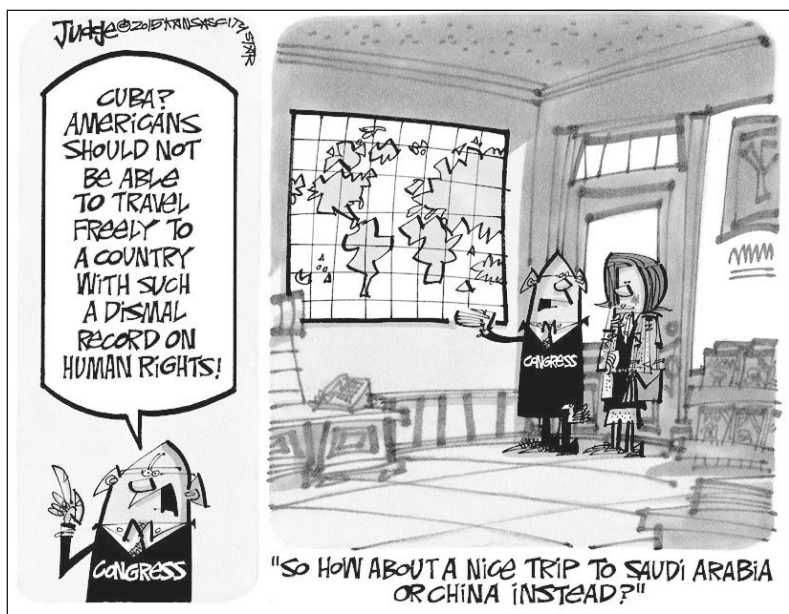
SB 324 requires no notification of the covert tax to be provided to consumers. Most Oregonians won't realize that they are paying an extra \$2 to \$20 to fill up their gas tanks.

The LCFS is not really about saving the planet. Even the complete elimination of all Oregon greenhouse gas emissions would not result in a measurable difference in global emissions.

It's not about social justice, either. Families living at or near poverty levels spend the highest percentage of their income for energy. They will suffer the greatest harm by forcing artificial and unaffordable increases in energy prices upon them.

Oregonians concerned about this misguided policy should contact their state representatives and senators and urge them to oppose SB 324.

**Sen. Doug Whitsett (R-Dist. 28)**  
Klamath Falls



## Blue Mountain EAGLE

195 N. Canyon Blvd. • John Day, OR 97845  
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MEMBER OREGON NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

PUBLISHER Marissa Williams, marissa@bmeagle.com  
EDITOR Scotta Callister, editor@bmeagle.com  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT Kristina Kreger, kristina@bmeagle.com  
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT Cheryl Hoefler, cheryl@bmeagle.com  
COMMUNITY NEWS Angel Carpenter, angel@bmeagle.com  
SPORTS Angel Carpenter, angel@bmeagle.com  
MARKETING REP Kim Kell, ads@bmeagle.com  
CUSTOMER SERVICE REP Lindsay Bullock office@bmeagle.com

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