

# It's time to free the Hammonds

We are hearing renewed rumblings that action in the clemency cases of Dwight and Steven Hammond is imminent.

President Trump should commute the sentences of the father and son and allow them to return to their Burns ranch.

Ranchers in Oregon's Harney County, the Hammonds have a long history of disputes with the Bureau of Land Management over grazing allotments. Dwight Hammond was convicted of one count related to a fire that burned 139 acres of BLM land in 2006. Steven Hammond was convicted of one count related to the 2006 fire, and a separate count related to a fire in 2001.

The Hammonds received a fair trial, were found guilty and were given fair sentences. In addition to lengthy probation, Dwight Hammond received six months in prison, his son one year. The original prison sentences were served.

But the government appealed those sentences because the judge ignored the minimum mandatory five-year sentence prescribed by the federal arson statute. The appeals court overturned the original sentence, and the trial court ordered the Hammonds to report to a federal prison in California to serve out the remainder of new five-year sentences.

Their case, mostly unnoticed in urban America, drew a lot

of attention in the western ranching community where they received a lot of positive support. And some that was less than helpful.

Before taking over the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, the militia group led by the Bundy clan conducted a rally in Burns in their support. The armed group urged the ranchers to refuse to return to prison and offered them "protection."

To their credit, the Hammonds chose not to make a bad situation worse and to instead follow the rule of law.

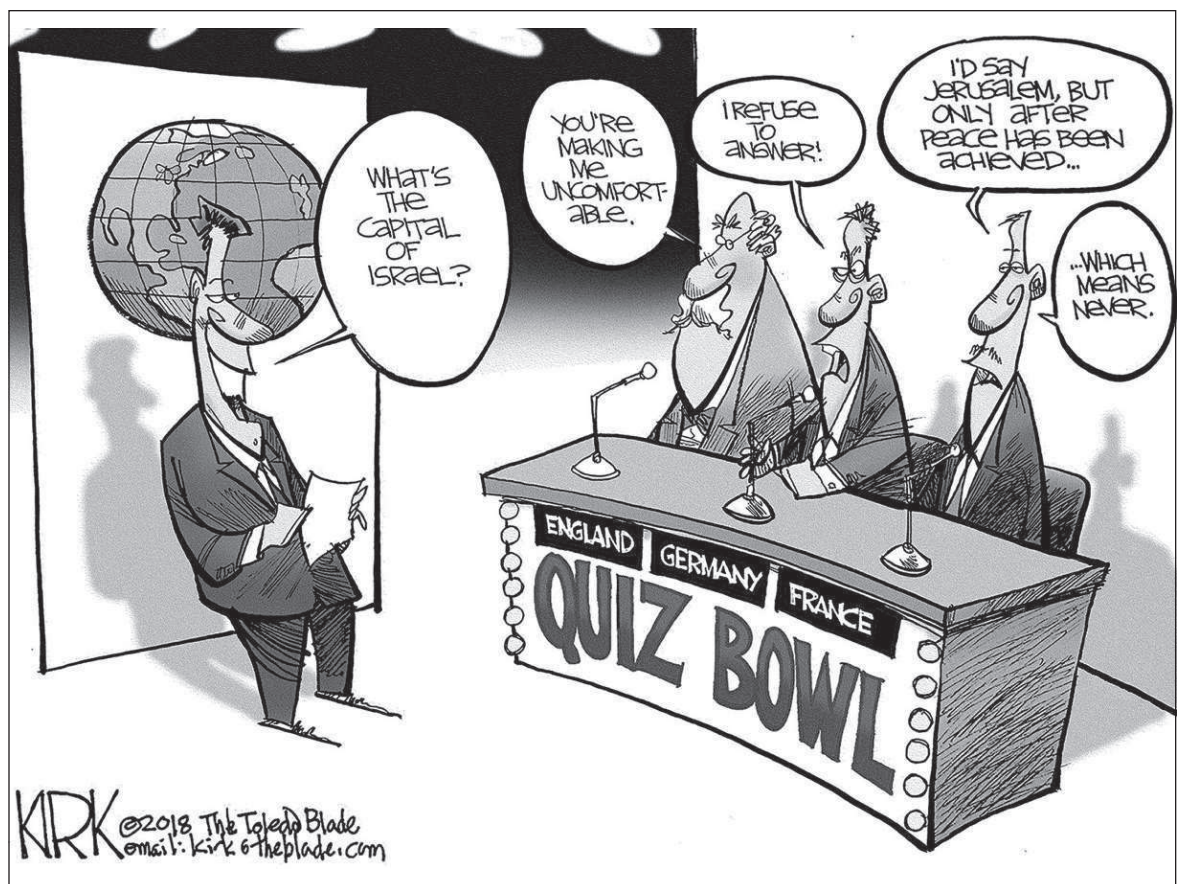
They went quietly to prison where they have sat since January 2016.

We are not fans of mandatory sentencing guidelines that deny judges discretion in considering circumstances when fixing punishment. Sometimes, the cause of justice is served by leniency.

The original judge in the Hammonds' case found a mandatory five-year sentence overly punitive given the circumstances of their crimes.

So do we. Ordering the Hammonds to serve the five-year mandatory sentence, though unquestionably legal under statute, was an injustice.

The Hammonds have been in prison too long. The president should commute their sentences to time served and send them home.



## GUEST COMMENT

# Enjoying public lands

By U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden and U.S. Rep. Rob Bishop  
To the Blue Mountain Eagle

Winter is finally winding down, and people are heading outside to enjoy the great outdoors.

Enjoying and protecting our outdoor places has helped define what's exceptional about our country. Millions of Americans enjoy hiking, biking, hunting, camping, boating, fishing and numerous other outdoor activities that improve our health and quality of life, while contributing to our nation's economic growth, especially in rural areas. In February 2018, the Bureau of Economic Analysis reported that recreation activities account for almost \$400 billion in economic productivity in the U.S. The growing outdoor recreation economy presents a win-win for us all.

However, when we head back home and talk to Utahns and Oregonians, we hear from outdoor recreation enthusiasts in every corner of our states about the bureaucratic red tape they encounter when they try to get outdoors.

While outdoor recreation continues to grow in popularity and economic impact, some barriers still exist. Well-intentioned but overly burdensome federal rules often stymie access to recreation on public lands while not providing additional protections to our natural resources. Thankfully, there are members

of Congress in both parties who are serious about increasing access to public lands. Our Recreation Not Red Tape Act is evidence of a true bipartisan solution to this problem.

This bill untangles the web of regulations and permitting hurdles that hinder access to public lands. While permits are often necessary for orderly use of land and to ensure public safety, many times they simply thwart access. What's worse, the multiple land management agencies that issue recreation permits often fail to coordinate or miss critical deadlines, which threatens the livelihoods of small business owners and their employees.

Federal agencies should be able to overcome communication difficulties and resolve jurisdictional quandaries quickly. Too many Americans are turned away by permitting processes that are convoluted, confusing and time-consuming. Streamlining this process is long overdue. We're all on the same team; it is time to start acting like it.

In Washington, politicians on both sides of the aisle often talk a big game, but fall short on real solutions. Yet holding our government accountable is essential. The Recreation Not Red Tape Act creates benchmarks that measure the effectiveness of federal land managers to ensure that they are truly serving the American people. The Recreation Not Red Tape Act also holds land managers accountable for ex-

panding access to new and existing recreational opportunities.

While some may argue it is not possible to promote activities such as recreation without imperiling other uses of federal lands, or the multiple-use mandate of our public lands, we believe this is a false dichotomy. The solutions this bill puts forward don't amount to a choice between one or the other. Instead, our bill reinforces the basic principle that many uses of federal lands can and should coexist.

Keeping recreation alive and thriving for the American people isn't something that divides us. We all know we should put down our electronic devices every once in a while and go outside. Recreational activities provide an outlet for more physical activity, a healthier citizenry and a greater appreciation for our natural resources. Our economy ultimately benefits from this.

Democrats and Republicans can't seem to agree on much these days, but we do agree about the importance of increasing and enhancing access to outdoor recreation. The Recreation Not Red Tape Act is an opportunity to seize on this moment of bipartisanship, proving that working together is good for the American people and the public lands they are eager to access.

Democrat Ron Wyden is the senior U.S. senator for Oregon. Republican Rob Bishop is a U.S. representative from Utah.

## GUEST COMMENT

# Good treaties make good neighbors

By Francisco L. Palmieri  
To the Blue Mountain Eagle

The United States and Canada will begin negotiations to modernize the Columbia River Treaty regime May 29-30. The 54-year-old treaty is an extremely important agreement with our best ally and partner in the hemisphere. Established in 1964, the treaty's flood risk and hydropower operations have provided substantial benefits to millions of people on both sides of the border and facilitated additional benefits such as supporting the river's ecosystem, irrigation, municipal water use, industrial use, navigation and recreation. The United States deeply values our unique and essential relationship with Canada.

Around the world, this treaty serves as a model for transboundary water cooperation — and rightly so. Americans and Canadians alike should be proud of the invaluable cooperation that has contributed to the development of the regional economy on both sides of the border.

But we don't live in 1964. There is a whole swath of arrangements established under this durable yet flexible treaty that should be modernized. In both countries, our understanding of the river and the

basin has changed since the development of the transboundary system with three treaty dams in British Columbia and one in Montana.

Last December we announced it is time to modernize the Columbia River Treaty regime. That's shorthand for the treaty and the myriad technical mechanisms and arrangements that translate the agreement into day-to-day realities. It is in many of these details where the United States wants to see improvements. As the United States enters into bilateral negotiations with our Canadian counterparts, our objectives include continued, careful management of flood risk; ensuring a reliable and economical power supply; and better addressing ecosystem concerns.

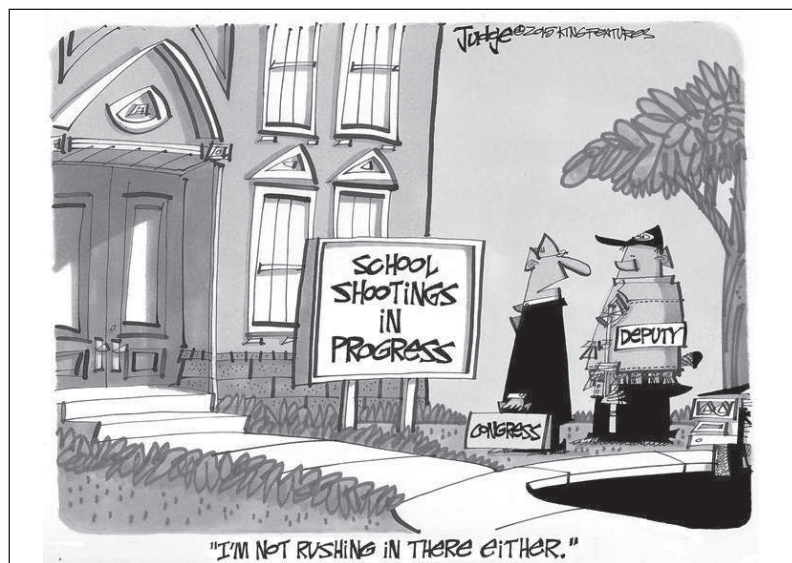
The U.S. negotiating team set these objectives with input from the people most directly affected by the treaty. On the U.S. side, the starting point is the U.S. Entity Regional Recommendation for the Future of the Columbia River Treaty after 2024, a consensus document released in 2013 after five years of consultations among the Northwest's Tribes, states, stakeholders, public and federal agencies. Since the submission of the regional recommendation, the Department of State has continued to meet with

and hear from the sovereigns, states and stakeholders within the region. The U.S. negotiating team deeply values the expertise and experience of the Tribes and will continue to consult with them on a regular basis as negotiations proceed. We are committed to keeping our American partners informed of our progress during the negotiations.

As we begin active negotiations with our Canadian neighbors, we will hold town halls throughout the region to hear views from the public on the process and the treaty. The first town hall took place in Spokane on April 24 on the margins of the Lake Roosevelt Forum and included an open question-and-answer session for the public. We plan to hold the next town hall later this summer.

Good treaties make good neighbors. The United States and Canada have a long, positive history of engagement on the Columbia River. We expect to continue that cooperative spirit when we engage in negotiations.

The author is a career diplomat and currently serves as the acting assistant secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs at the U.S. Department of State. He has spent over 31 years representing the United States at home and on assignments abroad.



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- **Oregon Legislature** — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: (503) 986-1180. Website: www.leg.state.or.us (includes Oregon Constitution and Oregon Revised

Statutes).

- **Oregon Legislative Information** — (For updates on bills, services, capitol or messages for legislators) — 800-332-2313.
- **Sen. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario** — 900 Court St. NE, S-301, Salem 97301. Phone: 503-986-1730. Website: www.oregonlegislature.gov/Bentz. Email: Sen.CliffBentz@oregonlegislature.gov.
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