

# Voices of frustration, and fear, at the Capitol

Thousands of Oregonians gathered in front of the state Capitol in late June to protest climate change bills that wouldn't help the climate but would significantly raise the cost of gasoline, diesel fuel, electricity and natural gas in addition to threatening rural jobs.

The only thing House Bill 2020 offered was the promise of "green" jobs and the fact that it wouldn't really impact the climate. Even proponents have said it would have impacted only about 0.12% of global greenhouse gases.

What the protesters said was from the heart, born of frustration and fear for themselves and their families and a realization that, in the large scheme of politics in Oregon, they barely matter.

Portland has the votes, so who cares about Pendleton or Tillamook or John Day? The voices were as clear as they were heartfelt. "We've got climate problems to deal with, obviously," 19-year-old Mary Hewitt told EO Media Group reporter Sierra Dawn McClain. Hewitt comes from a family of truckers, fishermen and other working-class people. "So many of my peers have come out supporting these bills. They think they're fighting for the environment, and I get it. But this is not the way to help the earth. Ride a bike to work. Walk more. Recycle. But don't crush me and my family. We're people, too."

Ellie Hilger, 30, of Tillamook also took part in the protest. "Tillamook is not just a tourist destination," Hilger said. "We work the land and take care of it. I come from a logging family. My dad runs a hay farm. This bill will destroy Tillamook industries."

"Crush" and "destroy" are not words demonstrating confidence in the Legislature. These folks — loggers, farmers, truckers and ranchers — have been the targets of Oregon environmental activists for decades. The activists have crippled the timber industry, once a mainstay of the state's economy. They have attacked ranchers — note the shameful attack on Dwight and Steven Hammond that con-

tinues in a Portland courtroom. Good Lord, haven't they been through enough? Now, even after they were pardoned by President Donald Trump, the environmental attack dogs continue.

And note the bills constantly introduced in the legislature attacking loggers, farmers and ranchers — the people who provide the state's food, fiber and shelter.

It's as though rural Oregonians — even the ones whose families braved the Oregon Trail to build a life here — are an endangered species. They feel that political "leaders" such as Gov. Kate Brown have not only abandoned them but are actively working against their interests.

We often hear chatter about healing the urban-rural divide. Yet some politicians appear to use it and try their best to widen the gap that divides Oregonians. As an example, where was Brown when last week's protest took place? Where were the others, who still insist HB 2020 was misunderstood?

This was a chance for them to talk with the protesters, to gain an understanding of their concerns, to show empathy and to tell them they fully understand and promise to prevent any legislation that would hurt rural Oregon. This was a chance to start building a bridge, yet they didn't show up.

HB 2020, the cap-and-trade climate bill, died in the Legislature during the waning days of the session. But another bill, HB 2007, which will require heavy equipment and trucks in the three counties around Portland to have expensive new diesel engines, passed. This will have the potential of increasing the cost of doing business in the state.

Proponents, including Brown, promise to keep pushing cap-and-trade bills in the future. No doubt they will, and in the process they will continue to drive a wedge between urban and rural Oregon, which would pay a disproportionately high price for an immeasurably small impact on climate change.

What also won't die is the distrust and damage Brown and others would inflict on Oregon, its people and its economy.



## SHOOTING THE BREEZE

# Wood vs. synthetic

As a young kid growing up in Grant and Wheeler counties, I saw lots of different guns. It seemed everyone in our communities went out each fall to go big game hunting. Nearly everyone in our immediate circle carried a standard caliber, wooden-stocked hunting rifle.



Dale Valade

The first synthetic stock I ever saw was on Bob Hansen's .338 Win Mag. What a spectacular rifle! It was a lefty Browning A-Bolt, stainless steel with a BOSS muzzle brake on the end. Besides keeping me in a steady supply of Snickers minis and hunting/shooting periodicals, Bob was a great friend of the family. What I remember most about that rifle was its biblical concussion due to the brake.

Today plastic and fiberglass stocks have really caught on, and in some hunting camps the wooden stock is now the odd one out. While you could flip a coin to decide which may be best, let's go over the pros and cons of each design.

Wooden stocks have been around since forever. Besides being sturdy, they are truly beautiful. They can require a lot of work to fit and finish, but nevertheless provide a classic,

timeless aesthetic to any hunting rifle so adorned. Scratches and dings require a refinish of the entire surface to extricate. Wood being organic is porous and therefore susceptible to changes in temperature and humidity. In extreme climates or continued exposure to wet conditions you can count on your prized wooden stock to warp. A warped stock will not shoot straight in addition to quickly reverting to a cosmetic state resembling driftwood. Still if proper care is taken to keep your stock sealed, especially in the action and barrel channel areas, the problems associated with warping are largely mitigated.

A sort of happy medium between dense hardwood and Tupperware is the laminate stock. These are made by epoxy gluing plies of wood together and then forming a stock from the resultant mass. They come in anything from plain Jane patterns to wacky neon colors. Having the aesthetic appeal of wood and the ruggedness of synthetic, these stocks are truly a great compromise.

Synthetic stocks really never caught on until the 1980s where their design advantages began to appeal to some, especially those in extreme temperatures and climates. They can range in materials from plastic to rubber to

fiberglass. Synthetics will not warp in extreme heat or moisture, and where weight is an issue with walnut stocks (backpack sheep hunting, for example), the synthetic is usually much lighter to carry. Lightweight rifles in heavy calibers produce severe recoil necessitating a muzzle brake to tame. Synthetics can be had in any color or texture. They're even making them in wood grain these days. Recently chasis-style stocks have caught on, although I find them about as attractive as a handyman jack personally.

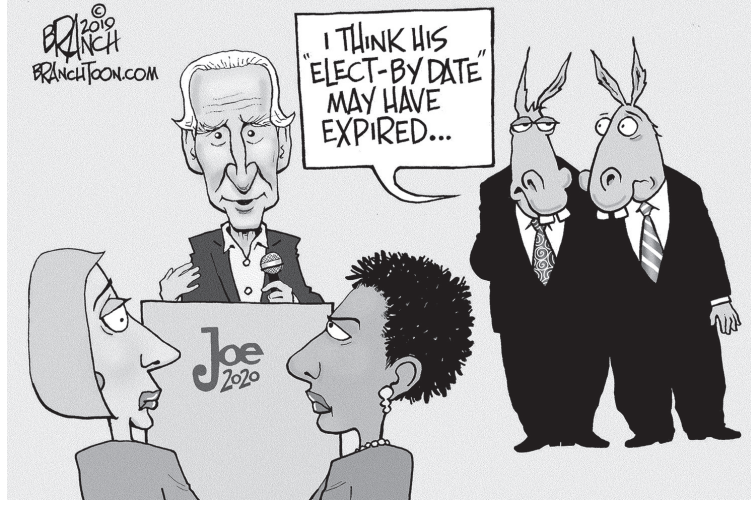
From my comparison, one might gather that the synthetic is the winner hands down. Perhaps, if function is truly the ultimate trump card in your deck. Although only then by a slim margin. To paraphrase Frank Jankunis, a gunsmith I knew for years, "Don't buy ugly guns, because you'll spend more time looking at them than anything else." I think beauty here is in the eye of the beholder, but practically speaking, there is room for both designs.

So which way do you vote? Wood or synthetic? Write in to shootingthebreezebme@gmail.com!

*Dale Valade is a local country gent with a deep love for handloading, hunting and shooting.*



Wood, laminate and synthetic stocks have different aesthetic and functional characteristics. Contributed photo



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Monument's fireworks well done

**To the Editor:**  
Jeremy Boyer does it again — even better than last year! Our guests from Bend and Portland said Monument did a much better job than either of their towns. The fireworks show flowed, not just individually fired off. Well done!

### Inhumane detention camps should end

**To the Editor:**  
I am joining thousands around the world on July 12 for a Lights for Liberty candlelight vigil to end inhumane detention camps. Please join us at the corner of highways 395 and 26 at 7 p.m.

Tiina Allas  
Prineville

Sandy Murray  
Prairie City

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