

Engery head, taxation major issues facing Oregon Senate

By State Senator Ken Jernstedt

This legislative session has been unlike previous ones—so things have been rather quiet and there has been markedly less communication from our constituents, perhaps due to the fact that the main preoccupation so far has been with the highly technical question of tax relief, and there have been no really emotional issues like those which have been pot boilers in the past—the death penalty, den-

tism, abortion, gay rights, etc. However, last week things picked up a bit in heat and tempo. One issue had to do with the Senate's refusal, twice, to confirm Governor Atiyeh's choice of Dr. Kelly Woods' appointment as Acting Director of the Department of Energy. The vote each time was 16-14. These votes came after hours of heated discus-

sion which resulted in the Environment and Energy Committee approving the appointment 5-3 and sending the matter to the floor for a decision. Dr. Woods has had an outstanding record in public service and in administration. Opposition to his appointment was primarily based on his allegedly pro-nuclear stance. At the forefront of the opposition was the Trojan Decom-

missioning Alliance, a group instrumental in the sitdown demonstrations at the Trojan plant, and in opposing nuclear sitting at Arlington. The testimony of a member of the Alliance was interesting. She described Dr. Woods as prejudiced, biased, and pro-nuclear. When asked if she would support affirmation of someone who was prejudiced, biased and anti-nuclear, her immediate res-

ponse was "yes." Apparently her biases are great, but anyone else's are not. The Alliance has now cavalierly offered to meet with the Governor to help him select an appointee. The Governor has the very interesting option of keeping Dr. Woods on in the Acting Director position for as long as he likes, because while Senate affirmation of department heads is now required through passage last November of Ballot Measure 2, the Governor submitted Dr. Woods' name as a courtesy to the Senate, and not because he was legally obligated to do so.

The other subject which caused a lot of sparks to fly concerned tax relief, and the form it should take. This brings to mind the old saw that the only fair tax is the one which you, not I, pay. We are now two months into the session and nothing concrete has been done about tax relief. Apparently the original Atiyeh plan has been buried by the House Revenue Committee, and a number of other proposals have now surfaced and are known to be waiting in the wings. Who knows how long it could take to give all of them close scrutiny!

In an effort to get things moving, I joined with five other Senate Republicans in proposing that the people take matters into their own hands through an initiative petition to put a modified version of the Atiyeh tax plan on the ballot. It has the Governor's approval and should find favor with the large majority of voters who apparently placed him in office partly because of his campaign promise to take a rewrite of Ballot Measure 6.

The proposals have been filed with the Secretary of State in preparation for their circulation. The tax plan proposed includes a 1.5 per cent property tax limitation on owner-occupied homes; a 12 per cent income tax cut; no more than 5 per cent increase in assessed values for 3 years, and no greater increase than the rate of increase in personal income in the State thereafter; tax relief for renters; proportionate returns to tax payers when the general fund surplus for a biennium exceeds 2 per cent.

By taking this action, we are stressing our belief that tax relief is not a partisan issue and we're also placing our faith firmly in the people by giving them the opportunity to pass judgment on the most important question facing them today.

It will be interesting to see how this venture fares.

Ullman urges pressure to assure more reforestation

Oregon Congressman Al Ullman said today that the timber-producing states must keep up the pressure to secure adequate funding for reforestation of public lands.

"I am pledged to continue work to reduce the backlog regardless of the recent ill-advised and inaccurate remarks of certain officials in the Carter Administration," Ullman said.

In remarks prepared for the annual meeting of the Western Forest Industries Association, Ullman said, "This effort will require on-going, organized hard work, not budgetary gimmickry."

"We're fortunate in having Oregon Senator Mark Hatfield and Congressman Bob Duncan in key positions on the Appropriations Committees. They've already demonstrated their ability to increase funding in this vital area," he said.

"As a result of their work over the years, the backlog of unreforested lands is substantially lower than the 5 million acres of the 1960's," Ullman noted.

"With full delegation support, I am optimistic we can again increase the level of funding proposed for reforestation," the 2nd District Oregon Congressman said.

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