

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Deceptive measure could cause unnecessary harm

Measure 5-103 on the Columbia County ballot in March sounds so simple and straight-forward. All it would do is prohibit all non-emergency county services for minors without parental consent. But what does that mean?

Here are a few potential results of this deceptively "simple" measure:

The drug and alcohol counselor at Vernonia High School works for Columbia Community Mental Health with state funds that "pass through" the county. It is technically a county program. So, if Measure 5-103 is approved, the high school's drug and alcohol counselor will no longer be able to help teens when the help is needed. Instead, if approached by a teenager seeking any information or advice about drugs or alcohol, the counselor would have to say something like "Take this permission slip home and have a parent sign it, then we can talk."

The after school recreation and study programs in Vernonia are funded through the Columbia County Commission on Children and Families; they are technically county programs so, if Measure 5-103 is approved, what happens when a student at the after school study program asks which web site to look up for answers to history, chemistry or (horrors!) biology questions? Will the tutor have to say "Take this permission slip home and have a parent sign it, then we can discuss it."?

Far-fetched, sure, but this measure would allow only emergency services without parental consent and it defines emergency services as "services provided immediately to a minor child when the minor child is in danger of loss of life or serious physical injury."

Both supporters and opponents of the measure are concerned with sexuality. One side says only parents should counsel minors about sex and the other says that would be best, but it isn't always possible.

A few years ago, a 14 year-old Idaho girl was in the news. She was pregnant by her father, who had been sexually abusing her for years. She couldn't get help, even from the courts, without parental consent and her father wouldn't give it. When adult friends tried to take her to Oregon for help, her father shot and killed her.

An emergency clause wouldn't have helped.

Please vote NO on Measure 5-103.

200 RESERVISTS CALLED UP
150 GUARDSMAN CALLED UP
200 CALLED UP
2 UNITS CALLED UP
MANY MORE CALLED UP
MORE RESERVES CALLED UP



WHY WE WILL



THE HOMELAND SECURITY!

Letters to the Editor

More information on Selders Creek trade

To the Editor:

First I must say that the following is my opinion and in no way is meant to reflect the opinions of my fellow councilors, the Mayor, or the City of Vernonia.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the editor and staff of *The INDEPENDENT* publicly for their accurate reporting of the logistics for the proposed land sale between the Oregon Dept. of Forestry and Longview Fibre which includes timberland in the Selders Creek portion of our watershed. And for listing of O.D.F. contacts included in the article regarding prospective timber sales by O.D.F. in the upcoming year that was in the recent issue of this paper.

I was present at the hastily called meeting with O.D.F.'s representative and the article that was printed on the front page of the paper accurately reflected what we were told by Tom Savage of the O.D.F. Astoria District.

I also would like to thank the folks who took the time to write

and show their support for the council's decision to draft and send a letter of concern to O.D.F. regarding the potential effects to our water supply due to additional logging activity in Vernonia's watershed. It is always refreshing to know people are paying attention.

In August 2002, I was made aware of this potential sale/trade by a concerned citizen. No one on the city's staff was aware of it and, when inquiries were made to local O.D.F. districts regarding the proposed sale/trade, we were informed there was nothing going on. This erroneous answer was due to O.D.F.'s flawed procedures for public notice and lack of internal communication between their own districts.

If not for an impromptu courtesy call from Tom Savage, shortly before the deadline for public input for this proposed sale/trade, our city would not have been aware of it until AFTER it had been consummated and trees started to fall.

There has been a lot of misinformation about the intent and content of the letter the city sent to O.D.F. and I would like to try and clarify a few points. First and foremost, the letter

was in no way meant to hurt anyone involved with logging activities. Though recent population and economic studies have shown that our community is no longer timber based, as 70 - 80% of our citizens commute out of town for their employment, there is still a general feeling that we are a logging community. Therefore the city's letter to O.D.F. was very ambivalent in regard to the effects of logging on water supply and quality.

The main point of the city's letter is a request that O.D.F. assist us in doing a full-scale watershed assessment for Rock Creek. As Rock Creek Watershed is our city's sole source of drinking water, the letter is very proactive in stating that we want to work with O.D.F. regarding the Selders Creek trade/sale AND any future activities that are proposed in the Rock Creek watershed. The only recent studies we have are from the DEQ in which a general summary, at best, is provided regarding logging activity and its effects on water quality.

I have been informed that a full scale study is in the works,

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