

# The INDEPENDENT

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## Opinion

### It's time to shine light on state and federal activity

In the 1970s, many states, including Oregon and Washington, passed anti-secrecy laws in order to keep the public business public. In the past few years, public access to public business has been swiftly eroding. The current federal administration, which sets the tone, has been the most anti-public in decades – maybe ever.

While the White House obsession with secrecy didn't start with 9/11 – for instance, they felt it necessary to keep secret who helped develop the national energy policy that affects all of our citizens – it has been used to stomp all over the people's right to know what their government is doing.

Media and other groups are trying to bring light to the escalating problem of government secrecy, at all levels, with the second national "Sunshine Week." This is not an issue for journalists, this is an issue for all citizens.

Your tax money is supporting your government and you should have the right to know what is being done in your name. As the Washington Public Records Act clearly states:

"The people, in delegating authority, do not give their public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know."

Since the 1970s that attitude has eroded. Oregon's 2005 legislative leaders spent more time than ever in secret deliberations under the guise of needing privacy for honest discussion of how to spend the people's money. If they need privacy to be honest, what do their public declarations say about them?

Additionally, public records laws have been modified so many times with private little exemptions that they often bear little resemblance to the original law.

Local governments, too, often overlook public records and meetings law when they are either careless, or find it inconvenient. There are specific requirements for notification of public meetings. Posting a meeting notice in one location, for instance, doesn't begin to meet either the letter or the intent of the law.

Open government should be the goal of every citizen. Those who are involved in governmental decisions, paid or unpaid, elected or appointed, hired or volunteer, must let the sun shine on their actions.

Hello, I'M A BIGSHOT...  
HE MAKES A WEE BIT OVER \$2 MILLION SALARY.  
... OF A HUGE MEGABUCK COMPANY.  
THAT MOVED ITS JOBS AND MANUFACTURING TO CHINA.



Because of the loss of jobs...  
IT'S NOT LUCKY TO BE UNEMPLOYED!

...MANY FAMILIES ARE GOING HUNGRY.  
NO ONE IN AMERICA SHOULD GO HUNGRY!

I'M ASKING ALL OF YOU...  
THE 'WEE LITTLE' OVER BURDENED WORKING CLASS.



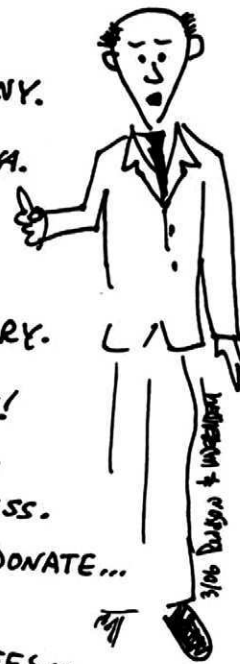
...TO DIG DEEP, FORK OVER AND DONATE...  
WHERE'S HIS GENEROSITY?

...A MILLION POUNDS OF FOOD STUFFS...  
IN AN ON GOING SITUATION.

...TO FEED THOSE IN NEED.  
NOT IF THEY HAD AMERICAN JOBS!

IT'S NO BLARNEY THAT GIVING TO A FOODBANK  
IS A GOOD IDEA

AND CAN BE SOMEONES...  POT O' GOLD



### Ike Says . . .

By Dale Webb, member  
Izaak Walton League, Nehalem Valley Chapter



There is a new debate brewing about sturgeon fishing. Recently the Oregon and Washington departments of Fish and Wildlife, "Agreed to expand the sturgeon spawning sanctuary below Bonneville Dam from the current five miles to seven miles in length to give additional protection to the fish. As a result, from May 1 to July 31 angling for sturgeon will be prohibited from Marker 85 to Bonneville Dam."

The debate involves the recreational fishery for oversized sturgeon, those over 60 inches long. For those of you not in the know, the sturgeon fishery is shared between the recreational and commercial fisheries. Both fisheries have a slot limit, the length in inches between minimum and maximum that the sturgeon must be in order to keep it. Once the fish exceed the 60 inch upper limit of the slot, they are protected from harvest, but not from catch and release, this is the crux of the problem. Sturgeon longer than 60 inches are protected because they are the fish that will spawn and maintain the fishery. These fish spawn mainly just below Bonneville Dam, which concentrates the fish and makes them vulnerable to catching.

In the past, this was not an issue, but since the early 90s, when a new fishery was started,

catching and releasing these prehistoric giants soon became very popular. The fish and wildlife departments established sanctuaries, over time, to provide some protection to these fish. So what is the concern if this is a catch and release fishery?

Major concerns for the two fishery departments are the lack of information on how many fish there are, and the impacts caused by catch and release. Several recent studies are starting to provide information. One study looked at cortisol levels in oversized sturgeon in the Bonneville area. Cortisol is a chemical that is found in fish that are suffering from stress. It is believed that stressed fish may not be successful at spawning, and cortisol levels are pointing out that, indeed, the fish are stressed.

Another study looked at how many oversized sturgeon there are in the Bonneville area, the answer to that question is an educated guess of around 2,000. It is thought that there are around 11,000 oversized sturgeon in the Columbia River below Bonneville. From fishing reports, we know that over 6,000 oversized fish are caught per year, most of them in the Bonneville area. The concern is the continual catch and release of the same fish, with the associated hooking and stress-related mortality. Many of the oversized sturgeon being caught in the Bonneville area have multiple hook wounds or leaders hanging from the vent. If this is reducing the brood stock fish in numbers or productivity, it will impact the consumptive harvest of sturgeon in the future.

Please see page 20