

[Email received 6/23/20 from Greg Weast, crmusic@netcnct.net]

Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area Commissioners,

I am very concerned about the direction that I believe the Commission is taking in protecting this wonderful resource that we call the Gorge. When the act was created, in I believe 1986, it created a path that was defined to protect the natural beauty of the gorge while still allowing economic growth. In other words, people living and making a living in the Gorge. My feeling and direct concern is that if the Commission continues in the current direction the urban areas will soon stagnate and die. I do realize that some areas are able to (at least on the surface) get along with tourists dollars, but not all areas are able to continue on that economic path.

The changes proposed to the land use designations will eliminate property owners rights to use their land for currently allowed uses, such as bed and breakfasts, agrotourism and such. By the way, current Oregon law actually allows that use and it would seem to me it would fit right in with the original intent of the Act.

Changes to the urban boundary area wording should attempt to straighten out the ambiguity of the original act and define a direct pathway for reasonable growth of our urban area, while protecting our Gorge and protecting the life style of each community. The proposed changes are beyond my comprehension. A onetime change that would allow 20 acres or 1% of the existing urban area whatever is less! REALLY?!? In my opinion and of many others, that is a formula for economic disaster in the Gorge. And that is absolutely not consistent with the stated purpose of the Act which expressly gives urban communities the ability to grow.

In addition, there appears to be a "climate change" chapter that is being added. While many would agree that we should be good stewards of this world, I don't understand why the Commission takes on yet another task, while they seem to be having a hard time dealing with what is already on the table.

Why is it that the Commission is in such an adversarial relationship with such a large segment of the people that live in the gorge? Well in my opinion its due in part at least to the points above.

And on a final note, when the lines for the Scenic area were finally defined on the Oregon side by a survey (thank you for doing this finally by the way) why in the world were things done like putting Chenoweth Middle School outside the urban growth boundary?

Thank you for hearing me out on this, and I truly hope you will consider my observations.

Respectfully,
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