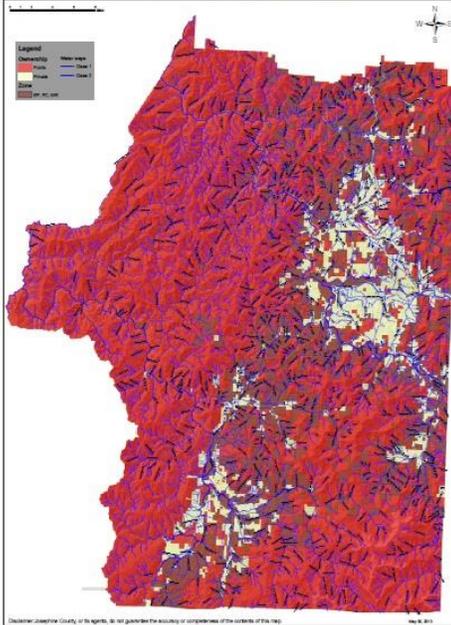


Legislative Update -- Fixing the Tax Death Trap

Josephine County Ownership



Sen. Baertschiger: Solving rural Oregon's tax death trap

State Senator Herman Baertschiger is bringing to light the tax death trap that rural Oregon is facing. The trap is that rural counties cannot grow due to deadlocked failed land-use policies and what land is left faces increasing taxes and fees. Senator Herman Baertschiger is using Josephine County as the perfect example.

The attached map shows in red the vast amount of publicly owned land that is not producing property tax revenue. It amounts to 72% of the entire county. Upon inspection it gets worse. The map reveals that the brown mapped areas are land that is in special zones (EFU; exclusive farm use, FC; forestry commercial, WR; woodlot reserve) where property tax revenue is limited or reduced. The area in white is private land.

The chart shows how Josephine County does not have room to grow and does not have adequate room to expand its tax base. As rural counties have suffered the state's worst unemployment rates and shrinking tax revenue growth, it also suffers from increases in state taxation. State Senator Herman Baertschiger, Jr. states, "Josephine County is just one

example of what rural counties in Oregon are facing because of poorly implemented Federal land use policies."

This is a tax death trap that rural communities face. It will not change until there are more choices and flexibility in Oregon's land use laws.



Senator Knopp: Privacy concerns over government car tracking

Government's use of technology to keep track of citizens is advancing exponentially, and Oregon Senator Tim Knopp believes we need to take a step back and evaluate what this means. Tim Knopp is sponsoring three bi-partisan bills in the current Legislative Session (SB 639, SB 640, SB 641) that would curtail government's ability to store and use information against Oregonians.

In particular, Senator Knopp wants to target so-called "license plate readers," which allow law enforcement to electronically read the plate of every passing car, truck or motorcycle. While this ability has some usefulness for the immediate interdiction of a car whose owner may have outstanding warrants, or in an "Amber Alert" situation, Knopp is concerned about what happens when that's not the case. Current law allows law enforcement agencies to keep indefinitely information about where and when a vehicle passed a certain point. Over time, these agencies could build up a "profile" of an individual driver – where they drive, what time of day they drive, what day of the week they drive – essentially mapping a private citizen's daily routine.

Although law enforcement believes storing this data may provide evidence to help them catch lawbreakers at a later time, Knopp notes,

"We've caught people before" this technology was available. Some states have been exploring 2 year time-frames for data storage, but Knopp wants to force the immediate deletion of any information gathered on a citizen for which there's no immediate probable cause to retain it.

Bills SB 639, SB 640 and SB 641 are the primary vehicles, and Senator Tim Knopp is joined in sponsorship by Senator Chip Shields, Representative Jennifer Williamson and Representative John Huffman. The Oregon ACLU has also expressed support for the Legislation.

Rep. Esquivel: Killing this will boost timber, farming & ranching



State Representative Sal Esquivel is working to rid Oregon of the quiet destruction caused by Juniper plants. Juniper interferes with the habitat of sage-grouse which is on the verge of becoming listed on the endangered species list. From that listing comes untold restrictions on farmers and ranchers. Juniper also cuts off grass used by Mule Deer. Juniper also hinders Oregon's agriculture water supply. A ten foot tall Juniper can consume up to 40 to 70 gallons of water a day. In the light of California's water crisis and Oregon's water battles, addressing this plant may be the saving grace.

There is one bill in the Legislature that would dedicate \$500,000 to Juniper elimination in the State. Sal Esquivel envisions a stronger and faster effort with a \$5 million state dedicated effort to removing Juniper. All of this will help provide more water while saving Oregon farmers, ranchers and timber industry from more needless regulations.

State Representative Sal Esquivel stated, "By acting on this it brings up the population of Mule Deer, Sage Grouse, helps the water level, helps the grass habitat in Eastern Oregon, allows more livestock to graze, and the Juniper wood would be used as a specialty product."