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Guest Viewpoint HHHH

Don't let warming ruin the outdoors

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Northwest Steelheaders are calling on the Oregon congressional delegation to step up and be leaders in combating global warming. This aligns with Bob Doppelt's column in the March 31 Register-Guard, "Fight climate change on two fronts," which says we need leadership and aggressive policies to bring about a sustainable energy future.

The world's top scientists have confirmed what the country's hunters and anglers have been saying for some time: Global warming isn't some far off possibility — it's here, and it's happening now.

Our commercial and sportfishing friends are seeing the effects of global warming firsthand: Fisheries are being closed, guide trips are being canceled due to flooding, and warm water is killing our beloved cold water fish.

More than just an ecological issue, this is an economic issue. Hunting and sportfishing alone contribute hundreds of millions of dollars to Oregon's economy. In 2006 there were more than 809,000 participants in these sports, and they spent nearly \$900 million.

The cost of not confronting global warming head-on is incalculable. The unraveling of our basic ecosystem services and natural resources has exponential ramifications.

On the other hand, the benefits of implementing global warming legislation offer Oregon vast opportunities. Oregon is already emerging as a world leader in energy efficiency and clean, renewable energy. Cloudy Oregon is actually becoming one of the leading solar energy centers in the United States and is home to the nation's largest solar cell maker, Solarworld in Hillsboro.

Portland is arguably the nation's wind development leader. It's home to PPM, the world's largest wind developer, and Horizon, the world's third largest. It's also the U.S. base of Vestas, one of the world's largest wind turbine makers. PPM is now moving into solar development as well. Oregon's green building center, Gerding Edlen, now has \$3 billion to \$4 billion of green building design projects around the country. Energy Connect is a "smart grid company" working nationwide to modify the load on the electric grid to reduce the need for additional power generation and capital expenditures. And the Eugene Water & Electric Board was one of the first

to invest in wind energy, and is leading the charge with energy efficiency.

The Northwest's strength is not just in production, but also in intellectual capital. Design and management firms are gaining markets far beyond Oregon, fortified by the creation of local green markets in energy and buildings, and retained by Oregon's quality of life edge.

In order to capitalize on all this momentum we need federal legislation that will give clean, renewable energy an even playing field with traditional energy sources.

In this spirit, thousands of sportsmen in Oregon are proving to be a driving force calling for such legislation. In February, 28 Oregon hunting and fishing groups joined 648 other groups nationwide in signing a letter urging Congress to confront global warming as a means of protecting our treasured outdoor traditions for our children and grandchildren.

The message from sportsmen is simple — all of our Oregon congressional leaders need to support legislation that begins reducing global warming pollution by 2 percent per year and gets us well on the path of what scientists say is necessary to avoid the most dangerous impacts from climate change. One such bill is the Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act, which includes significant funding for critical fish, wildlife and habitat protection, and will likely face a vote in the Senate this spring.

As sportsmen we know that the threat is urgent, the solutions are clear, and the time to act is now. Sen. Gordon Smith should join Sen. Ron Wyden in co-sponsoring this important legislation. It is the right thing to do for our rivers, our fish and, especially, our children.

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