



letters to the editor

Climato-cides We face a future full of challenges about the health of our communities and the impacts of a warming climate. Of the many intersections between environmental justice, health and climate change, one that often is overlooked is pesticide use.

Pesticides are petrochemicals — toxic chemicals made from extracted oil and fracked gas. Agricultural pesticides also increase greenhouse gas emissions of nitrous oxide, a greenhouse gas 300 times more potent than carbon dioxide.

Not only do pesticides use oil and gas as their base, these chemicals require extractive mining of minerals such as phosphate ore, a practice that strips away mountain tops, contaminates water and releases dangerous air pollutants. Phosphate mines are environmental-justice burdens for the tribal and low-income rural communities living downstream and downwind.

Above-ground pesticides kill bees, butterflies and birds, all of which are critical for our food supply and are the basis of our entire ecosystem. Below-ground pesticides kill communities of soil microorganisms capable of drawing down and storing vast amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Reducing pesticides to reap multiple benefits for climate, communities and the environment should be a necessary part of Oregon's local and state climate action plans.

Lisa Arkin, Eugene Brown stepped up I'll admit to having never been a great fan of Gov. Kate Brown until recently. Some people, like Wayne Hatch (Letters, Dec. 27), don't realize how good we have it in Oregon compared with other states. I think we're blessed to live in a state where the governor has imposed public safety requirements that have resulted in Oregon being among the lowest states in cases and deaths per 100,000. Oregon is 47th in cases per 100,000 and 48th in deaths per 100,000 among all 50 states.

For what it's worth, of the 10 worst states in COVID-19 cases, eight of the 10 have Republican governors who initially resisted strong measures to keep their citizens safe.

Brown stepped up to the plate and hit a home run. Stats don't lie.

Bruce A. Nelson, Eugene Back to respect I agree with Eugene Smith (Letters, Dec. 29) about being disgusted with how people attach the flag of our country to automobile roofs and pickup beds. Particularly so because I am a Vietnam veteran and a member of the VFW.

The VFW and the American Legion have protocols of how to dispose of worn-out or damaged flags in a dignified and respectful way.

In fact, these organizations have asked people to give them flags now longer flyable. This sadly was, at one time, a sign of respect. It seems in the past four years respect of anything — people included — has become passé.

We need to return to respecting our nation's flag and the people who live here again.

Leonard Hecker, Creswell

