

Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

March 18, 2021

SCR 16 (in memoriam: Marty Myers)

Statement of

Bruce Taylor

4815 SE Brooklyn Street

Portland, Ore. 97206

I first got to know Marty Myers just over 20 years when I worked for Defenders of Wildlife. Defenders and Waterwatch were attempting to negotiate a settlement of a long-running dispute over RD Offut Co.'s plans to purchase and develop the state's Boeing lease lands outside of Boardman.

It was a contentious process, involving the sale of almost 100,000 acres of state land, an endangered species, a lot of water rights, and many millions of dollars of potential investment. Over the course of about two months, Karen Russell of Waterwatch and I sat in a conference room with Marty and his very expensive lawyers and consultants trying to hammer out an agreement. Karena and I used to marvel at the number of billable hours they were piling up, and Marty got a little exasperated at times, as those who knew him might well imagine.

But we eventually came to an agreement, with Marty agreeing to set aside 23,000 acres of Threemile Canyon Farms' new ownership for a conservation area to be managed by The Nature Conservancy. Marty wasn't happy about it but he understood that it was part of the cost of doing business and the right thing to do.

It ended up working out well for all concerned. Conservation interests got long-term protection for one of the last large chunks of native grasslands and shrub steppe habitat on the Columbia Plateau. And Marty and company got the opportunity to develop their vision for 21st Century agriculture on a large scale.

I only occasionally saw Marty in the years after that, usually brief encounters in the hallways of the Capitol. But what stuck with me after all those years was that he was a straight shooter, and a genuinely nice guy.

And in the way these things sometimes work out, I came to think of Marty Myers as a friend. Which is the way politics is supposed to work, with people working out their disputes in ways that respect the needs of parties on both sides of the issue, and maybe even allow them to work together in the future.