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***Less interest here in the environment***

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We Oregonians came blasting out of the starting gate very quickly in the race toward environmental respectability. In 1973, Gov. Tom McCall could speak of "Oregon's status as the environmental model of this nation" with little fear of contradiction.

Once we found out the race was to be a marathon and not a sprint, we seemed to lose interest and have now fallen far behind.

The National Environmental Policy Act was passed in 1969. It required that all federal agencies give equal consideration to environmental as well as technical and economic considerations when considering projects, plans, or programs. Further, it required that the decision process be comprehensive, rational, and transparent.

Since 1969, a total of 27 states have passed legislation requiring a similar and parallel process to be used for state projects and plans.

Unfortunately, Oregon is not one of them.

Apparently, this has been brought on by a failure of will, not by a lack of recognition of need. In September 2000, the Oregon Progress Board published the "Oregon State of the Environment Report 2000." One of the key findings of the report was that the state's existing environmental management system was in dire need of improvement. The report states: "Measuring ecological conditions, trends, and risks is fundamentally different from the problems Oregon's environmental programs were initially established to address. Resolving them will require new approaches ..."

It has been seven years since the Oregon Progress Board's report was released. Unless I missed something, there has been no mention at all of any attempt to even look into upgrading our state's environmental management system to come up with "new approaches" adequate in today's world.

California has CEQA - the California Environmental Quality Act. Washington has SEPA - the State Environmental Protection Act. We have nothing comparable, but we do have three proposals for siting LNG terminals on our shores.

Do you suppose this is because the three Oregon sites are the best on the Pacific Coast from an environmental, technical and economic standpoint? Or, might the LNG industry be merely following the line of least resistance?

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