



Other Viewpoints

Delay at Sunflower penalizes consumer

Environmentalists recently made progress in their fight to block expansion of the Sunflower Electric Power Corp. generating facility at Holcomb.

A federal judge in the nation’s capital recently sided with the Sierra Club in a legal dispute over expansion of the coal-fired power plant. An attorney for the environmental group predicted the decision would at least delay the project.

That’s music to the ears of environmentalists, who will do whatever it takes to stall this project and every other comparable plan, regardless of the cost to consumers.

As the economy rebounds, the need for affordable energy will only grow. Consumers understandably will want and need reliable sources of energy.

Every delay to the Sunflower project sought by environmentalists will penalize consumers in driving up costs, while also threatening reliability of the power supply.

Sunflower provides power for about 400,000 Kansans and plans to build an 895-megawatt plant to meet peak demands of some 448,000 households in Kansas and Colorado.

Environmentalists have protested due to additional carbon dioxide emissions that would come from a bigger facility.

Everyone has an interest in protecting the environment. That said, the goal should be to produce affordable energy from a variety of sources, coal included, to meet demand while taking bold new steps to reduce emissions.

Sunflower voluntarily pursued innovative plans to address environmental concerns, with a bioenergy center to commercialize renewable energy technologies that includes an advanced algae reactor to cut carbon dioxide emissions by up to 40 percent. All utilities should be encouraged to pursue such innovation.

Indeed, it’s necessary to strike a balance between affordability, reliability of energy sources and environmental responsibility.

The shortsighted thinking of the Sierra Club and other environmentalists fixates on one aspect – the environment – with too little regard for how utilities would address future energy needs in ways that best serve consumers.

Utilities have a responsibility to meet demand in an affordable way while pursuing technology that significantly reduces emissions. The Sunflower project would do all of that, something opponents still fail to acknowledge in their dogged determination to bring the expansion plan to a halt.

– The Garden City Telegram, via the Associated Press

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U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp, 126 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715 or Fax (202) 225-5124. Web site: huelskamp.house.gov

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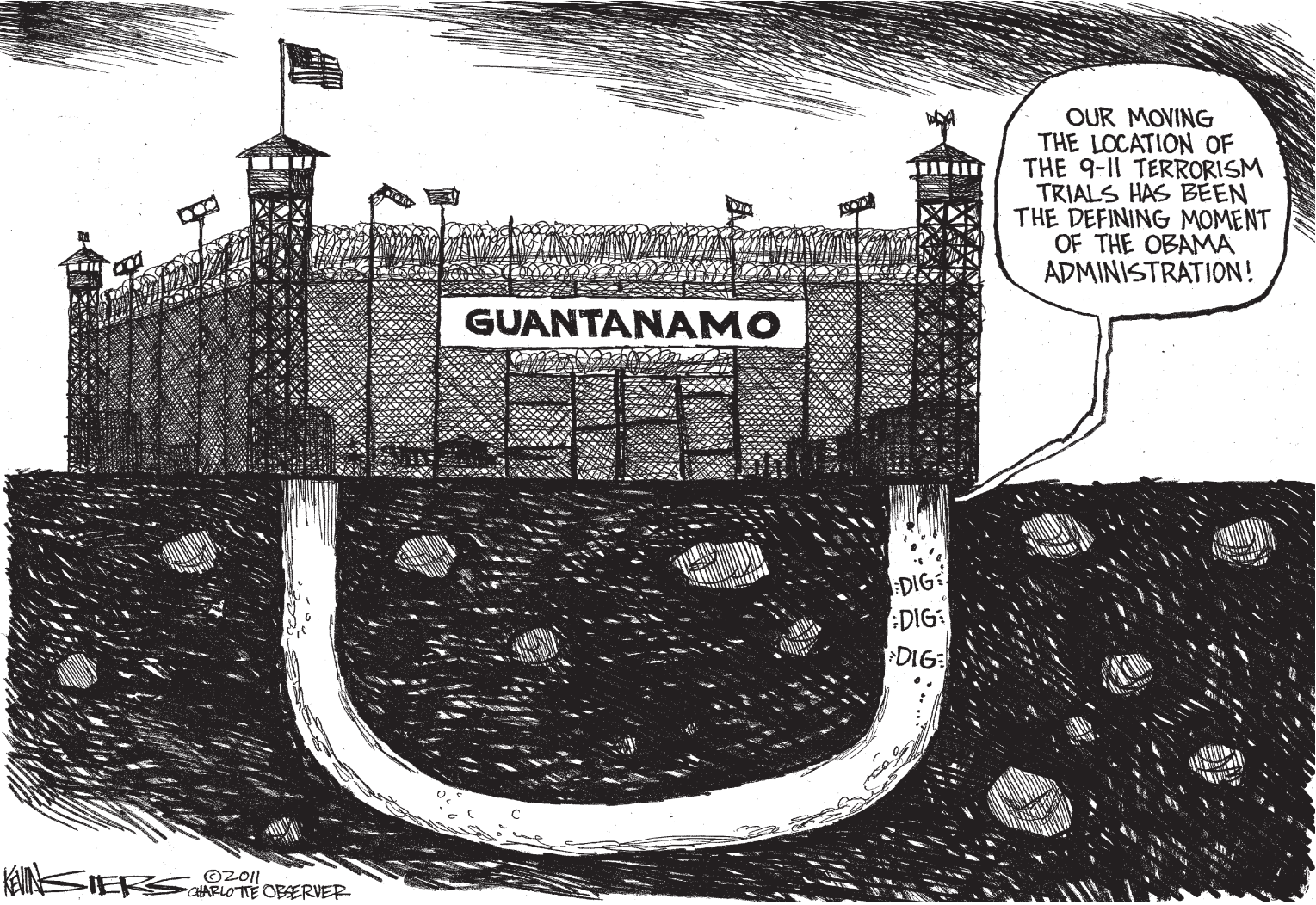
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Peanuts matter to the little people

The fight over spending cuts is a fight over peanuts when you look at the total national spending, but those cuts are being made to the programs with the least ability to resist or the least inside connection to find the money somewhere else in the maze of projects and programs.

A freshman congressman from the state of Washington has promised her constituents that she will find the money somewhere else to replace a \$10 million cut that was intended for work at the Port of Vancouver.

A representative from Ohio is seeking to restore money for a project in his state that falls under the House’s budget cut. A \$20 million transportation grant for New Hampshire falls under the axe. Senators and representatives from New Hampshire and Maine are working feverishly to get money elsewhere.

There are many more examples of this sort, but they’re all just peanuts in terms of trillion-dollar deficits. Remember the Alaskan “bridge to nowhere?” I haven’t heard their now-famous ex-governor suggesting that Alaska reimburse the Federal treasury for it to help with deficit reductions.

Certainly, we need to prioritize programs and expenditures, but to direct the cuts at the



Ken Poland
• Ken’s World

room and board in those facilities.

I’m not so sure that Thomas County and Colby haven’t benefited from federal and state grants in excess of federal and state taxes paid in. The second interchange for I-70, the removal of the overpass on K-25, community college grants and assistance, disaster relief on township and county roads, the list can go on and on.

Beneficiaries of those programs have political clout. There are definite financial benefits to businesses from those programs. Do you think the single mom, with three or four children (whatever the reason of her single status) benefited greatly from the elimination of the perceived bottleneck in traffic due to the overpass on K-25?

Social services for our neighbors are vulnerable to the budget cuts being proposed or demanded. How much political clout do you suppose the beneficiaries have? Head Start, free breakfasts, lunch assistance, all these programs benefit those with the least political clout.

Ken Poland describes himself as a semiretired farmer living north of Gem, a Christian, affiliated with American Baptist Churches, and a radical believer in separation of church and state. Contact him at rcwine@cheerful.com.

There’s worms in Washington’s apple

There is something unique about a Washington apple.

In the produce section at the grocery store, you pick up an apple and look at the outside for quality. Sometimes, though, an apple that looks good on the outside has worms on the inside. Despite all of America’s goodness, apples from Washington, D.C., have worms destroying the core of the country: out-of-control spending and debt.

Between now and the end of May, Congress will have to act on three important measures to kill these worms once and for all: last year’s budget (through a continuing resolution), next year’s budget and the debt ceiling. Let’s think about these as three bites into the apple.

The first bite: the 2011 budget. Despite the fact that there has been a deadline since 1974 requiring Congress and President Obama to finish the budget by Sept. 30, here America stands – more than six months later – facing a possible government slowdown because there is no budget. The failure of the last Congress to pass a budget for 2011 is surprising and disappointing, given that Democrats controlled both chambers of Congress as well as the White House. It should have been smooth sailing to pass and sign a budget into law.

Instead, the federal government has relied on short-term spending measures to keep the lights on. In February, just a few short weeks



U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp
• Capitol Notes

after the 112th Congress took office, the House passed H.R. 1, a measure to get us through the rest of 2011. Unfortunately, Senate Majority Leader Reid refuses to allow the Senate even to debate and amend the proposal. The money runs out on April 8, and Reid is still dragging his feet over a \$30 billion difference in spending cuts. It’s perplexing why he’s so worried about \$30 billion when the country’s debt hovers around \$14.3 trillion and we are in the third straight year of trillion-dollar deficits.

The second bite: the 2012 budget. The House faces an April 15 deadline to produce a budget outline for next year. The President offered his budget for the House to consider in February. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office assessed the economic impact of President’s budget, and it just adds to the country’s debt, ensures trillion-dollar deficits, increases taxes, and fails to reduce spending.

The Republicans will offer a 2012 budget this week that is an alternative to the President’s budget: a clear path to prosperity. In addressing the drivers of the country’s debt as well as out-of-control spending, the Republican budget seeks to foster economic growth and job creation, repeal and defund Obamacare and ensure health and retirement security in a fiscally-responsible manner. Throughout this week, the House Budget Committee – of which I am a member – will be releasing the details of our budget.

The third bite: the debt ceiling. Sometime between now and the end of May, the federal government will likely reach its debt limit. There will be no more credit available. So, President Obama is begging Congress to raise the limit on our credit card. If passed, this would be the 11th increase since June 2002 (when it was set at \$6.4 trillion). Our debt limit now is \$14.294 trillion, more than double the 2002 limit. The only way Congress can justify an increase in the debt limit is with guaranteed and substantial spending cuts and/or a balanced budget amendment.

For the sake of Americans footing tax bills now and in the future, as well as the economic prosperity of our nation, let’s hope that these three bites do not encounter the spending and debt worms that threaten to spoil our nation.

Tim Huelskamp is the congressman from Kansas’ 1st District, serving his first term.

Mallard Fillmore
• Bruce Tinsley

