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OPINION | OTHER THOUGHTS

The EPA Should Stand By Biofuels

THE GRAND ISLAND (Neb.) INDEPENDENT (Nov. 22): The Obama administration took a big step backward in its commitment to renewable energy last week. The EPA proposed reducing by 3 billion gallons the amount of ethanol and other biofuels that would be required to be used in blended gasoline in 2014. This is a significant reduction in the Renewable Fuels Standard that could have a ripple effect throughout Nebraska and the Corn Belt. Ethanol has played an important role in bolstering the ag economy during the last five years. Corn prices were kept high because of the great demand for corn to produce ethanol. Now, unfortunately, as the country's commitment to ethanol has seemed to decline, so have corn prices. The administration and Congress have faced unrelenting pressure from the oil industry to weaken or eliminate the Renewable Fuels Standard. Oil companies see ethanol as a competitor, cutting into their enormous profits. Greed is at the heart of their opposition.

Unfortunately, the oil companies have been able to pick up some allies in their crusade against ethanol. Some environmental groups have wrong-headedly opposed ethanol. They contend that too many acres of conservation land are being planted because of the high corn prices. They also contend that it's not efficient to produce ethanol. Cattle producers also have spoken out against ethanol because higher corn prices increase their feed costs.

The benefits of ethanol are numerous. Ethanol reduces the country's dependence on foreign oil. Oil production in the U.S. has increased tremendously, but ethanol is a fuel that is produced throughout the U.S., including 24 plants in Nebraska that employ approximately 1,200 Nebraskans. The Nebraska plants produce 2 billion gallons of ethanol a year and use 700 million bushels of grain.

Ethanol production increases the demand for corn, raising corn prices and helping farmers to be profitable, even during rough weather years. This bolsters the rural economy. Farmers spend more on new equipment and new vehicles. Land prices increase. More profit in the fields means more money spent on Main Street.

Ethanol is also a cleaner burning fuel that reduces air pollution. This has played an important role in reducing smog in big cities where traffic gets stuck in gridlock.

The timing of the EPA's plan is unfortunate as farmers have been harvesting what may be a record corn crop. Farmers also have been waiting for Congress to pass a new Farm Bill that will give them some stability in farm policy for the future. On top of that, now the country's renewable fuels policy is being thrown into doubt.

The reduction in the RFS is only a proposal at this time. President Barack Obama has always been a strong supporter of biofuels. There is still time for the administration to step back from this mistake, and it should do so.

OUR LETTER POLICY

The PRESS & DAKOTAN encourages its readers to write letters to the editor, and it asks that a few simple guidelines be followed. Please limit letters to 300 words or less. Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind. In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the PRESS & DAKOTAN will accept no letters attacking private individuals or businesses. Specific individuals or entities addressed in letters may be given the opportunity to read the letter prior to publication and be allowed to answer the letter in the same issue. Only signed letters with writer's full name, address and daytime phone number for verification will be accepted. Please mail to: Letters, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078, drop off at 319 Walnut in Yankton, fax to 665-1721 or email to views@yankton.net.

ON THIS DATE

**By The Associated Press**  
Today is Monday, Dec. 2, the 336th day of 2013. There are 29 days left in the year.  
**Today's Highlight in History:** On Dec. 2, 1859, militant abolitionist John Brown was hanged for his raid on Harpers Ferry the previous October. Artist Georges-Pierre Seurat was born in Paris.  
**On this date:** In 1804, Napoleon crowned himself Emperor of the French.  
In 1823, President James Monroe outlined his doctrine opposing European expansion in the Western Hemisphere.  
In 1927, Ford Motor Co. formally unveiled its second Model A automobile, the successor to its Model T.  
In 1939, New York Municipal Airport-LaGuardia Field (later LaGuardia Airport) went into operation as an airliner from Chicago landed at one minute past midnight.  
In 1942, an artificially created, self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction was demonstrated for the first time, at the University of Chicago.  
In 1954, the Senate voted to condemn Wisconsin Republican Joseph R. McCarthy for conduct that "tends to bring the Senate into disrepute."  
In 1961, Cuban leader Fidel Castro declared himself a Marxist-Leninist who would eventually lead Cuba to Communism.  
In 1969, the Boeing 747 jumbo jet got its first public preview as 191 people, most of them reporters and photographers, flew from Seattle to New York City.  
In 1970, the Environmental Protection Agency began operating under director William Ruckelshaus.  
In 1980, four American churchwomen were raped and murdered outside San Salvador. (Five national guardsmen were convicted in the killings.)  
In 2001, in one of the largest corporate bankruptcies in U.S. history, Enron filed for Chapter 11 protection.  
**Ten years ago:** The Supreme Court ruled unanimously that after knocking, police don't have to wait longer than 20 seconds before breaking into the home of a drug suspect. Authorities in Ohio announced that they had linked 12 shootings along a 5-mile stretch of interstate around Columbus, including one that killed a woman and another that broke a window at an elementary school. (A suspect, Charles A. McCoy Jr., later pleaded guilty to manslaughter and 10 other charges, and was sentenced to 27 years in prison.)  
**Five years ago:** President-elect Barack Obama promised swift action on an economic plan "to solve this crisis and to ease the burden on our states." Republican Saxby Chambliss won a Georgia runoff, denying Democrats a 60-seat, filibuster-proof majority in the Senate (until Al Franken's belated victory over Norm Coleman in Minnesota). Folk singer Odetta died in New York at age 77. Henry Molaison, the patient known as "H.M." whose severe amnesia led to groundbreaking studies of how memory works, died in Connecticut at age 82.  
**One year ago:** In the aftermath of a murder-suicide involving Kansas City Chiefs linebacker Jovan Belcher, NBC's Bob Costas delivered a "Sunday Night Football" halftime commentary supporting gun control. Israel Keyes, charged in the death of an Alaska barista, was found dead in his jail cell in Anchorage in an apparent suicide; authorities announced that he'd been linked to seven other possible slayings in three other states. Hundreds of concrete slabs, each weighing more than a ton, fell from the roof of a highway tunnel west of Tokyo, crushing vehicles below and killing nine people.  
**Today's Birthdays:** Former Attorney General Edwin Meese III is 82. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., is 74. Actress Cathy Lee Crosby is 69. Movie director Penelope Spheeris is 68. Actor Ron Raines is 64. Country singer John Wesley Pyles is 63. Actor Keith Szarabajka is 61. Actor Dan Butler is 59. Broadcast journalist Stone Phillips is 59. Actor Dennis Christopher is 58. Actor Steven Bauer is 57. Country singer Joe Henry is 53. Rock musician Rick Savage (Def Leppard) is 53. Rock musician Nate Mendel (Foo Fighters) is 45. Actress Suzy Nakamura is 45. Actress Rena Sofer is 45. Rock singer Jimi HaHa (Jimmie's Chicken Shack) is 45. Actress Lucy Liu is 45. Rapper Treach (Naughty By Nature) is 43. Tennis player Monica Seles is 40. Singer Nelly Furtado is 35. Pop singer-celebrity judge Britney Spears is 32. Actress-singer Jana Kramer is 30. Actress Daniela Ruah is 30. Actor Alfie Enoch is 25. Actresses Deanna and Daniella Canterman are 21.  
**Thought for Today:** "Great minds have purposes; little minds have wishes. Little minds are subdued by misfortunes; great minds rise above them." - Washington Irving, American author (1783-1859).

FROM THE BIBLE

When He went ashore, He saw a great crowd, and He had compassion on them, because there were like sheep, without a shepherd. And He began to teach them many things, Mark 6:34. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis



Capitol Notebook

At Grassroots, DRA Renews Its Relevancy

BY BOB MERCER  
State Capitol Bureau

PIERRE — In the past week, Dakota Rural Action lost its fight against new labeling regulations for raw milk, but was part of the winning side working to block Powertech's uranium-mining project.

Yet to be determined is how Dakota Rural Action will fare in two other battles.

There is DRA's city by city campaign to legalize the raising of chickens in people's yards.

And there is the organization's battle to stop TransCanada's next crude-oil pipeline across western and south-central South Dakota.

There are two themes to the activities. One is allowing people to choose their food and raise it locally if they wish, as in the raw milk and the chickens.

The other is stopping big energy projects that can pose threats to natural resources, such as groundwater with TransCanada and Powertech.

Listening to many hours of testimony on raw milk, a person could wonder why Dakota Rural Action would be opposed to food safety.

The organization's position, however, is defense of the little guy.

The argument is that small dairies are threatened by labels warning raw milk can make you sick and labels showing the date of production and the name of the dairy.

The state Department of Health supports the state Department of Agriculture on the new labeling rules.

As for letting people raise chickens in urban areas, a hen isn't the same as a tomato.

Vegetables and fruit don't cluck and crow, but they do attract animals. Chickens will attract other types of animals that, by nature,

want to eat them and their eggs.

And there is South Dakota's alpha predator. Who knows whether chickens would attract immature mountain lions that make their way down from the Black Hills into backyards and neighborhoods.

DRA began in 1987 amid that decade's farm crisis. Based in Brookings, DRA today has chapters in five eastern counties, a Black Hills chapter and a west group.

Dakota Rural Action's opposition to the TransCanada oil pipeline is part of a national clean-energy movement.

President Obama ultimately will decide whether the pipeline gets the necessary permit to pierce the U.S.-Canada border to enter our country.

Without that permit, the pipeline can't carry crude oil from the tar sands of Alberta all the way to refineries in southern states and then to other pipelines and to the ports on the Gulf of Mexico.

The inclination of the Obama administration appears to be to delay the decision, making the pipeline project more expensive each day for TransCanada.

In opposing Powertech's uranium project, Dakota Rural Action is part of a loose coalition of people and groups interested in protecting South Dakota's environment.

Many people fear the concept of pumping extra-oxygenated water into uranium ore bodies and then pumping the solution back to the surface where dissolved uranium is removed.

Two state boards suspended Powertech permit hearings and instead await decisions by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency before proceeding again.

This is a new approach by state environmental boards. Dakota Rural Action meanwhile shows a renewed presence as well.

Let's Bury The N-Word

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.  
Tribune Content Agency



Leonard PITTS

The N-word again. Of course. Six years after the NAACP staged its symbolic burial, that word has proven rumors of its demise greatly exaggerated.

In just the last few weeks we've had the following: Richie Incognito, a white player for the Miami Dolphins, tags a black teammate, Jonathan Martin, with that epithet and black players defend the white guy because he's an "honorary" brother; Matt Barnes of the Los Angeles Clippers tweets the word in criticizing his teammates and says people who have a problem with that should "get used to it"; Trent Williams, a black player for Washington's professional football team (speaking of racial slurs) is accused of using the word against Roy Ellison, a black referee, a charge Williams denies.

Then it gets worse. The mushrooming controversies prompt two African-American NBA analysts, Charles Barkley and Michael Wilbon, to defend their usage of the N-word. And it's not just the jockocracy, either. Last week in *The New York Times*, celebrated social critic Ta-Nehisi Coates, who is African-American, made the old "context" argument; i.e., it's OK if we say it, but it's not OK if you say it. In defending the N-word as an "in-word" Coates noted how some women will jokingly call other women by a misogynistic term or some gay people will laughingly use a homophobic slur in talking with or about one another.

Some of us would say that's not such a good look, either. Some of us think there is cause for dismay when women, gay people or any put-upon people adopt the terminology of their oppressors as self-definition.

But the larger point is this: so what? Like it or not, the N-word is not like the words used to denigrate women and gay people or, for that matter, Italian, Irish or Jewish people, simply because the experiences those peoples endured in this country do not compare with those of African-Americans.

The N-word is unique. It was present at the act of mass kidnapping that created "black Amer-

ica," it drove the ship to get here, signed the contracts at flesh auctions on Southern ports as mother was torn from child, love from love and self from self. It had a front-row center seat for the acts of blood, rape, castration, exclusion and psychological destruction by which the created people were kept down and in their place.

The whole weight of our history dictates that word cannot be used except as an expression of contempt for African-Americans. The only difference when a Matt Barnes or Ta-Nehisi Coates uses it is that the contempt is black on black.

"Context?" That argument grows more threadbare every time it's made. It may also be growing less effective in cowering white people of good will. As reporter Richard Prince recently noted in his online "Journal-

isms" column, a number of white journalists have refused to be silenced on this. That includes Mike Wise of the *Washington Post*, who wrote a brave piece confronting those who would deny him the right to be concerned because of his race.

"That doesn't work for me," he said. "I deserve a seat at this table. This is about the world my 3-year-old is going to live in." Indeed, it is about the world all our children will inherit. African-Americans are not walled off from that world, cannot commit this sin of self-denigration in our little corner of existence and command everyone else to ignore it or pretend it doesn't matter.

Our stubborn insistence otherwise speaks volumes. As does the fact that some so determinedly defend the indefensible. How can we require others to respect us when this word suggests we don't respect ourselves?

So burying the N-word, well-intentioned as it was, turns out to have been fruitless. Something in some of us seems to need this word. And to agree with it.

Let us find a way to bury that instead.

Leonard Pitts is a columnist for *The Miami Herald*, 1 Herald Plaza, Miami, Fla., 33132. Readers may contact him via e-mail at lpitts@miamiherald.com.

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YOUR LETTERS

Preservation

Ruth Ann Dickman, Utica

The state's 125th anniversary opening celebration in Yankton was wonderful! I hope everyone thanked Curt and Cena Bernard for opening up their place of business for this gala event. And they didn't even charge for this! The women all looked so beautiful in their elegant gowns, they truly looked like ladies!! And the men looked so nice also!

I went to see the Cramer-Kenyon Home, also. What a beautiful home! I'm so glad that Mrs. Cramer had the insight to preserve her historical home.

It seems that most of the dignitaries of Yankton want to tear down the historical buildings and build new buildings, which have to be repaired in a short time! Europe has one up on us, as they preserve their historical buildings!