

Achieving proper balance

The op-ed "Bishop's PLI gives away public lands that belong to all Americans" was disturbing. Congressman Bishop argues that he's following a balanced approach: protecting the rights of the state to benefit from its natural resources and protecting the rights of Utahns and non-Utahns to enjoy the land by fostering conservation. Meanwhile, Mitch Hescox and George Handley object that Bishop's plans for conservation don't balance his plans for land and resource development.

What constitutes adequate conservation plans? Perhaps we can learn from an Exxon internal memo written in 1982 and recently published. The memo warned that climate change will "require major reductions in fossil fuel combustion," and "there are some potentially catastrophic events that must be considered. ... Once the effects are measurable, they might not be reversible."

Already in 1982, Exxon scientists were convinced that fossil fuels contribute to climate change. Exxon recognized that we would need to reduce fossil fuel use and to worry about effects that may become irreversible. Is Bishop considering the irreversible nature of his plans? Construction in wilderness areas causes irreversible changes to the land, water and scenery. Additional fossil fuel development causes more species extinction and causes ice sheet melt to become irreversible.

Irreversible is forever.

How do you balance forever?

To achieve proper balance, voters should please let the congressman know that when they vote this fall, climate change, land conservation, wilderness preservation, species protection — these will be their top concerns. Everything else can be fixed later, but these things are irreversible.

Judy Weiss

Brookline, Massachusetts

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