

## Abused, demeaned

To the Editor: I believe Gov. Vic Atiyeh and Sam Dement, his appointee to the Fish and Wildlife Commission, are being given a bum rap.

The environmental and conservation community has publicly asked the state Senate committee to reject Dement's appointment solely because he is a rancher or farmer.

In the early '70s Dement was running for state representative. As state leader of the Northwest Steelheaders, I called on him. I discussed various fish and wildlife matters with him, including our push to make steelhead a game fish and keep them out of the gillnets and out of the marketplace. Dement was most supportive on many controversial matters.

This contrasted, for example, with politicians like Rep. Paul Hanneman. Hanneman listed himself as a river guide, yet he refused to support making steelhead a game fish in Oregon as they were in Washington, Idaho and even California.

I recently called Dement and asked him if any of his critics had contacted him to discuss his real views. I was surprised to learn that not one of those opposing him had given him the courtesy of even a telephone call to learn how he felt about important matters.

It is unfortunate that the governor and Dement should be publicly abused and demeaned solely because Dement happens to be a rancher. Have their critics forgotten the many times they have been allowed to trespass on the private property of ranchers or farmers to hunt, fish or bird watch?

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## Don't prejudge Tonkin

After Gov. Vic Atiyeh announced the appointment of Portland-area automobile dealer Ron B. Tonkin to the Tri-Met board of directors, the following response — usually punctuated with a giggle — immediately hit the street:

How can one of this state's leading car salesmen become an effective problem-solver and advocate for a mass transportation system that by definition functions as an alternative to the automobile?

Interesting question, but it has an answer. Clearly, this governor and Tonkin are both aware of the baggage — the alleged conflict of interest — that Tonkin brings to the Tri-Met board. Surely it is absurd to believe that Atiyeh wants Tonkin to help destroy the bus company so that automobile usage in the Portland area, where Tonkin sells cars, would increase. Surely that is not why Tonkin, who has demonstrated an interest in public service in the past, accepted Atiyeh's offer to

serve.

The very conspicuous nature of Tonkin's vocational interest in automobiles should be a signal to skeptics that here is a man who knows that his performance on the Tri-Met board will be scrutinized in a spotlight. Tonkin says he can offer his years of demonstrated business acumen to help Tri-Met through difficult financial times. Maybe so.

Even if not, it would be unfair to Tonkin, or any other candidate for state boards and commissions, to prejudge performance or impugn motives simply on the basis of the nominee's vocational interests.

The Oregon Senate, in its confirmation examinations of Tonkin and Philip R. Bogue, the Portland State University official who also was appointed by Atiyeh to the Tri-Met board, should ignore the superficial logic of the coffeeshop pundits and administer the proper test of gubernatorial appointments: Are the nominees qualified to serve?