

1000 FRIENDS OF OREGON

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*Bob
another
copy*

March 5, 1982

Governor Victor Atiyeh
State Capital
Salem, Oregon 97310

RE: Request for Investigation Under ORS 180.070 of
Sale of Cattle from Wasco County Judge Rick Cantrell
to Agents of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh

Dear Governor Atiyeh:

Enclosed is a March 5, 1982 memorandum to me from Staff Attorney Mark J. Greenfield, together with attachments, that concludes circumstances surrounding the \$17,540 sale of 50 head of cattle by Wasco County Judge Rick Cantrell to representatives of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, Antelope, warrant an investigation by the Attorney General to determine if grounds exist to convene a grand jury to determine whether a bribe was either offered, given or received in this transaction.

On behalf of 1000 Friends of Oregon and Buck Coe, Wasco County rancher and Second Vice-President of the Oregon Cattleman's Association, and currently a complainant in civil proceedings before the Oregon Ethics Commission involving this same transaction, I hereby request that you direct the Attorney General to initiate such an investigation.

I realize this is a serious matter and we do not make this request lightly. However, the affidavits attached to the memorandum of two highly-qualified, independent cattlemen, including one who is an Oregon state brand inspector, strongly suggest that the \$17,540 payment sought by Judge Cantrell and paid by the Rajneesh is something in the order of \$5,000 above fair market value and perhaps \$2,500 more than that.

In addition, the timing and irregular circumstances of the sale, and the violations of state branding inspection requirements combine to make the entire transaction appear all the more questionable.

On October 25, 1981, Judge Cantrell and the Rajneesh agreed to the number of cattle to be sold and the price.

On November 4, Judge Cantrell voted (in a 2-1 vote) to approve the Rajneesh's petition for incorporation of a new city

in Southeast Wasco county. Judge Cantrell did not disclose the fact of the impending cattle deal, thus depriving parties to the proceeding an opportunity to question him about it.

On November 9 the cattle were shipped and weighed in a highly-irregular fashion. There was no branding inspector as required by state law. It was night time, making cow-calf matches difficult. "In 25½ years of being a brand inspector I have never seen a sale in which cows, calves, heifers, bull calves and large bulls were all weighed together and sold at the same price." (Affidavit of brand inspector D. D. Buck Hodges.) In addition, the sale was not accompanied by a bill of sale, such a bill of sale has never been produced, and there are numerous inconsistent statements by Judge Cantrell on the record about the number and type of cattle that were actually sold.

On November 15 the Rajneesh paid Judge Cantrell by check.

Ordinarily this would be a matter for a local district attorney. However, as the memo discusses, Wasco County District Attorney Bernard Smith is now defending the county in formal proceedings before the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals in which the petitioners (Wasco county ranchers whom our attorneys represent) contend that Judge Cantrell's failure to disclose the fact of the pendency of the same cattle sale denied them an impartial hearing before the Wasco County Court.

Thus we ask that you exercise your authority under ORS 180.070 to direct the Attorney General to initiate an investigation.

On February 24, Mr. Coe and I met with the Attorney General. He asked that the attached memorandum be prepared and said that the most appropriate basis on which he could proceed was in response to your direction.

It is my impression that rough knowledge of the information contained in this letter is widespread in Central and North Central Oregon generating considerable anger and concern. The unpleasant question that this information raises can not simply be ignored. In fairness to all parties concerned, and in order to uphold the integrity of the governmental process, I believe it is imperative that an impartial and vigorous investigation of this matter be promptly initiated by the appropriate authorities so that the publicized questions of bribe-giving and bribe-receiving can be properly resolved and put to rest permanently, one way or the other.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,


Henry R. Richmond
Executive Director

HRR/lobw

cc: Mr. Buck Coe

Wasco County Attorney Bernard Smith

Attorney General David Frohnmayer

Enclosure