



OTZINACHSON

The Boondoggle that is Eminent Domain

By David Hafer

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QUOTE

*Because we
don't think about
future generations,
they will
never forget us.*

~Henrik Tikkanen

The recent Supreme Court decision on eminent domain deserves a storm of protest. Unfortunately, the focus of criticism has been on political labels rather than on the historic and environmental ramifications of the issue.

In reality, the recent decisions on eminent domain has not created anything really new. The decision rendered in *Kelo v. New London* will simply accelerate a process that has been going on for over a century. The decision also strips a way a façade that eminent domain exists for the public good, opening the process to new levels of political corruption.

The U.S. Constitution grants government powers of eminent domain but this authority was rarely exercised until the 20th century. In theory, eminent domain, is supposed to give government the right to take private property for the purpose of creating something in the best interest of the general public.

However, eminent domain enabled federal and state government to seize millions of acres of private land for the sake of building dams, nuclear power plants, military installations and the interstate highway system.

Ostensibly, this is all done for the pub-

lic good, but the basic reality of eminent domain authority is that it enables government to size private property, turning it into boondoggle projects benefiting special interests that can exert considerable influence over the political process. In other words, the little guy gives up his home and land so that big money interests with politicians in their pockets, reap the benefits.

The legacy of eminent domain authority manifests itself in a century of ruinous boondoggles ranging from an energy guzzling interstate highway system that addicts us to imported oil to urban "renewal" projects that destroy historic ethnic neighborhoods. Without eminent domain authority, the freeway system would probably not exist. We would still travel by train. The air would be much cleaner and our cities more livable.

Thanks to eminent domain authority, countless acres of farmland are paved, forests leveled, streams polluted and sacred native American sites violated and turned into a sprawling wasteland of dead concrete and asphalt.

If we are to protect our homes and save what is left of our unspoiled land, we must persuade Congress to impose stringent curbs on the ability of government to trash communities for the benefit of greedy devel-

Message from the Chair: Work and Celebrate

Enthuse thyself! From its beginning, the Sierra Club has been an upfront advocate of encouraging people to develop and deepen a conservation ethos by getting them into an outdoor experience. Believing that where the feet go / the heart follows, the Club bodies forth this philosophy by sponsoring a wide variety of exceptional local, national and international volunteer led outing opportunities. These trips are a wonderful way to invigorate and reinvigorate the spirit, and to do it in the company of other good folks who care about the earth and the issues.

Ed Lawrence, Chair

Thanks for your continued support for the Sierra Club.

Your membership is important to preserving the integrity of our environment and keeping our communities safe and healthy.

Without you, we can not fight for what is right!

Otzinachson now has 100% organic cotton t-shirts emblazed with our Group name for \$15.

Many thanks to Nancy Cleaver for the calligraphy and design! The sale of these shirts will help fund our newsletter and activities.

They will be available at the John Eastlake talk and slide show on February 22nd and by mail from Roy Fontaine, 3 Kirkland Estate, Watsontown, PA 17777.

OTZINACHSON

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Check out the
Otzinachson Website at
[www.sierraclub.org/
chapters/pa/Otzinachson/](http://www.sierraclub.org/chapters/pa/Otzinachson/)**

ENERGIZE OTZINACHSON!!!

Otzinachson's executive committee (ex-com) meets every other month. All members are invited and encouraged to attend. Our Sierra Club Group is only as effective and active as the volunteers who participate. We meet in the library of the First Baptist Church of Lewisburg located around the block from the post office at the corner of South 3rd and St. Louis Streets. Use the St. Louis St. entrance.

Meeting schedule:

**Tuesday, April 5, 2005
Tuesday, June 7, 2005**

*The Union of Concerned
Scientists report that Biotech
Crops use MORE not less
Pesticide*

By Ed Lawrence

For years, the biotechnology industry has claimed reduced pesticide use as a major benefit of genetically engineered (GE) crops, which comprise more than half the corn, soybeans, and cotton grown in the United States. However, a recent study found that the most widely planted GE crops use more pesticide than conventional crops.

The study, commissioned by UCS and conducted by agricultural economist Dr. Charles Benbrook, found that herbicide-tolerant crops (the predominant GE crop) require significantly more pesticide than conventional varieties. Since 1996, when GE crops were first introduced, herbicide-tolerant crops have required 122 million pounds more pesticide than what would have been used if conventional varieties had been grown instead. This amount was only slightly offset by lower pesticide use on crops engineered to produce their own insecticide.

Learn more at www.ucsusa.org

Next February, Otzinachson members Catherine McLaughlin and her husband, Ed Lawrence, will be leading a Sierra Club cross-country ski trip into Canada's Laurentian Mountains. The trip will be limited to 10 participants and feature a hut-to-hut ski in Quebec's beautiful Papineau-Labelle Wildlife Reserve. Club members who are competent X-country skiers conversant with basic technique and who would like an extended back country skiing experience can look for sign up information in the Outings section of the Sierra Club magazine.

Please don't  us!

It's Spring—a time of renewal.

Please won't you take this opportunity to renew your Sierra Club Membership today? You know we've missed you!

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Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to *Sierra* magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.

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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet



*Public Hearing on Hazardous Emissions
Approvals Near Milton* By Samantha Pearson



Please Help (Continued)

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Editor's Bookmark Picks:

Audubon: Take Action
www.capitolconnect.com/audubon

Local Government Commission
www.lgc.org

**Center for Community Action/
Environmental Justice**
www.ccaej.org

The Future of Mankind (Continued)



Voluntary Simplicity: Living in Keeping in One's Values

By Samantha Pearson

Pennsylvania Family Farm Coalition Formed



The Real Threat to Our State's Deer Population by David Hafer



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