



Senator Val Stevens

Serving Washington's 39th Legislative District

NEWS & VIEWS • BIOGRAPHY • SPONSORED BILLS • E-MAIL ME

Does the destruction of the KRKO radio towers mean domestic terrorism is on the increase?

As groups like the Earth Liberation Front go unchallenged, I fear they will start hurting or killing people they don't agree with.

Domestic terrorist groups like the ELF are getting away with destroying property and hurting family businesses that have taken a lifetime to build.



This last ELF attack took out KRKO radio's broadcasting towers just because the group claimed AM radio waves harm the planet. The group's spokesman said the ELF is entitled to destroy anything they feel is dangerous.

My fear is that they will quickly move beyond shutting down businesses they oppose to targeting the people who own and operate those businesses.

I am already aware of these domestic terror groups. In 2005, I introduced Senate Bill 5314, which would have criminalized acts of eco-terrorism with penalties up to a class B felony if someone is hurt. The bill also would have created a registry for eco-terrorists, much like the state's sex offender registry.

In retrospect, I'd drop the registry. We don't need to track eco-terrorists; we need to make their acts criminal and classified as felonies. That way, law enforcement will use their increasingly limited resources to catch these criminals. Police departments will not put resources into an investigation that will result only in a slap on the wrist.

Under current law, this type of crime is classified as criminal sabotage, an unranked felony with a maximum sentence of one year, although if there are aggravating circumstances, a court may impose an exceptional sentence.

Eco-terrorists are predators who plan their attacks and leave behind their signature. In March 2001, the FBI classified the ELF as the top domestic terror threat in the United States. These lawless people don't care about what or who they hurt. We need a state law that recognizes them for the monsters they are.

In fact, they must be singled out with a law directly aimed at this brand of terrorism. It shouldn't be left up to the courts to justify more prison time. We need to get the organizers' names, track them, find their training camps, and stop them.

The destruction of the KRKO towers is just one of many ELF-attributed attacks in recent history:

- In May 2001, the [University of Washington's Center for Urban Horticulture](#) was burned down by eco-terrorists resulting in \$7 million in damages.
- In August 2003, a [family-owned mink farm in Sultan](#) suffered \$500,000 in damages at the hands of eco-terrorists.
- In March 2008, a \$7 million arson fire set by eco-terrorists ravaged model homes on the [Street of Dreams near Woodinville](#).
- This month's destruction of the [KRKO radio broadcasting towers](#) will cost millions to repair.

The next Legislative session starts January 11, 2010. I plan to offer a bill to make eco-terrorism a felony, punishable with serious jail time. Domestic terrorism is something we want to stop – immediately and permanently.

Sincerely,