

March 15, 2009

Dear Editor:

I would have ignored Mike Dey's March 12 letter if he'd been truthful. In his response to my guest column about President Obama's stimulus plan, Mr. Dey stated, "Essen, you grossed \$1 million in 2006 under the Bush administration. That seems like it was a bit more than a trickle to me."

After mocking me, Dey went on to claim I wanted to put him and other trappers out of business. Well, at least he got things half-right!

Since I've never publicly stated how much money I make, Dey either manufactured the million-dollar figure or misquoted a newspaper article about the telephone company my wife and I own. If the latter was the case, the article was obviously referring to the corporation's income, before wages and operating expenses, not me personally.

While I must say that having people think I personally made a million dollars in a year is amusing, it's more important to point out that once again a trapper has been untruthful in defending his industry. When I was Footloose Montana's president, I was constantly shocked by how trappers would grossly misrepresent our efforts and tie us to organizations we had no contact with.

I enjoy a good debate and respect that other people have differing points of view. In the case of trappers, they have a tough argument. How do you justify brutally and indiscriminately killing wild and domestic animals for profit? That many trappers have resorted to lies proves they've already lost.

Yes, Mr. Dey, I want trapping outlawed on public lands. If that puts you out of business, so be it. As society advances, certain things, such as slavery, repression of women, and duels at gunpoint, are no longer considered acceptable.

If you took an animal to a busy street corner and beat it with a club or slowly strangled it, you'd be arrested. Why should people look the other way when trappers do the equivalent in the forest?

Debate me if you want, Mr. Dey. But next time, stick to the truth.

Sincerely,

Marty Essen