

Record Searchlight

Obama -- the Great Privatizer

By: Bruce Ross – April 15, 2013

You know, for a Kenyan Marxist, Barack Obama is sure getting a lot of love the past week from free-market outfits like the Cato Institute and Reason.

Why? His proposal to study privatizing the Tennessee Valley Authority -- the Depression-era utility behemoth that still serves a major swath of the South.

Bloomberg notes the political twist, the Republicans who generally represent the TVA's service area pretty much universally oppose the idea -- though they talk up their support for free markets and small government generally.

Personally, I was wondering what kind of precedent this might set for the West Coast, and the north state's own Central Valley Project. So is Oregon's Sen. Ron Wyden:

Senator Ron Wyden, an Oregon Democrat and chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, "shares concerns" about the potential sale of the TVA, his spokesman Keith Chu said in a statement.

Wyden's Oregon constituents get power from the government- run Bonneville Power Administration, which operates 31 hydropower projects in the Columbia River Basin.

Federally owned energy producers "have been a bedrock of local economies," Chu said. "It would be shortsighted to sell off this kind of public asset in search of short-term revenues."