

—Slug:.....COMM-0852.opin.view.jones
—Contributor..... Dan Jones
—Contributor email.....dan@siteprod.com
—For section..... Voices/Viewpoint
—Format.....Opinions
—Dateline.....
—Article Number:.....43058



Notes from editor (not for publication):



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 Fending for ourselves

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

2 As more federal resources are being withheld from New
3 England states, we need to build our own regional future

####END SUBHED####

4 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

5 EVERYONE I KNOW is frightened and angry at this moment.
6 The shooting of innocent civilians by federal agents.
7 Uncontrolled foreign adventurism in Venezuela, Gaza, and now
8 Greenland has deepened our sense of helplessness.

9 In New England, we are smarting from the actions of a
10 president who is withholding congressionally authorized funding

11 from our Democratic Party–controlled states that don’t agree with
12 his policies.

13 Future public resources are now being cut by a MAGA-
14 fied dis-United States, rapidly running off the rails.

15 We Yankees are realizing we are on our own. Our big
16 question is now: What can we do about this?

17 I believe that our New England states need to come
18 together and build a regional future based on our regional culture
19 of communitarian values and deep respect for rational inquiry.

20 Let’s start with a vision of a “new Federalism,” which will
21 require our various state legislatures to get over their parochial
22 focus and pass legislation and policy that begins to insulate our
23 several states from the caprices of an authoritarian administration.

24 Imagine that we build a unified New England Coalition,
25 where we work together to solve our crucial problems, without
26 waiting for the incompetent energy sink of Washington.

27 Freeing ourselves from the politics of retribution and
28 incompetence now controlling Washington, while trusting our
29 local cultural connections and world-class skills base, we could
30 get to work.

31 To do so, we could create coalitions in multiple areas of
32 need.

33 * * *

34 IT ALL BEGINS with who controls the money. New England
35 already [sends more tax money to the federal government than it](#)
36 [receives in benefits](#).

37 As more federal resources are being withheld from blue
38 states, we need mechanisms that would allow our citizens to
39 make their U.S. tax payments directly to the state coffers. I’m not
40 talking about tax avoidance but tax redirection.

41 [Good legal research](#) has shown that state legislatures can
42 create an alternate tax reserve system that would allow local
43 citizens to deposit federal taxes in, say, possible state banks or
44 other local repositories that we could create. States could then

45 use those funds to make up for funds being illegally withheld by
46 the Trump administration.

47 Establishing a funding capacity and allowing direct
48 deposits for our individual federal taxes would enable our
49 regional state governments to make up for lost resources.
50 Working with neighboring states, we could fully fund dynamic
51 operating coalitions around needs that seemingly are no longer
52 funded by the Feds, such as critical FEMA funds required to
53 respond to increasing climate disasters.

54 We could start by building a regional health coalition.
55 We've already started to create public health priorities above and
56 beyond a failing Department of Health and Human Services and
57 toward fashioning a Medicare-for-all program for New
58 Englanders.

59 Thus, a universal health care system could provide basic
60 coverage for all our region's citizens.

61 Lord knows, we have many of the best medical schools,
62 hospitals, and community health centers in the country. Building
63 a universal health care system would allow us to shift away from
64 the medicine for-profit model that's dependent on dysfunctional
65 private insurance.

66 A regional food coalition might help us learn to feed
67 ourselves again, while freeing us from dependence on the current
68 processed food economy. Together with our neighbors, Upper
69 New York state and Québec, we could work toward growing 80%
70 of our food needs rather than the current meager 10% of local
71 food we now consume.

72 Once we got started, and given the skills and resource
73 we share, this regional "federation" model offers a lot of
74 possibilities. In a nation that has yet to imagine a sustainable
75 transportation system, perhaps a regional transportation coalition
76 would help us learn from China and Europe on developing a
77 more-efficient system.

78 Then there is energy. Using offshore-wind development,
79 a healthy cooperation with Hydro Québec, and radical shifts in

80 our expectations of convenience, we could create a more-
81 resilient regional energy grid.

82 In a future that will be defined by increased emergencies
83 arising from the climate crisis, such control of our production and
84 demands will be necessary for the resilience needed. Such an
85 effort would offer relative independence from the current
86 destructive petroleum-based economy.

87 * * *

88 THIS WHOLE CONCEPT adds up to something akin to what
89 has been called “soft secession” or “uncooperative federalism.”
90 We could build regional coalitions in these key areas — finance,
91 health care, food, transportation, and energy — while still
92 maintaining some connection to the U.S. monetary,
93 transportation, and security systems.

94 Those of us now unnerved by the authoritarian turn of
95 our federal government and the impossibility of negotiating any
96 positive directions with the authoritarian cultures of other regions
97 could instead demand that our legislatures work to join with our
98 neighbors for preserving and improving our regional well-being
99 and security.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

100 **DAN JONES** has been working on local resilience and
101 energy issues in central Vermont.

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

####BEGIN MAXISSUE####

102 0

####END MAXISSUE####

LINKS:

103

####BEGIN LINKS####

####END LINKS####

VIDEO:

104

####BEGIN VIDEO####

####END VIDEO####

LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

105

####BEGIN LOGLINE####

####END LOGLINE####