

Oregon House speaker wants to cut tax rebate in half

SALEM (AP) — House Speaker Tina Kotek is introducing a plan to halve cut the tax rebate Oregon residents receive.

The Portland Democrat announced the idea Thursday, the day after state economists revealed that the “kicker” tax rebate could be the largest in state history.

Oregon Public Broadcasting reports that in a bill Kotek introduced Thursday morning roughly half of the estimated \$1.4 billion tax rebate would be kept by the state and spent on a set of transportation initiatives the speaker argues will benefit public safety, air quality, and job creation.

The proposal has few precedents — the personal income tax kicker has only been redirected once, as lawmakers grappled with a budget shortfall in 1991. And it’s not an easy task to accomplish. In order for her bill to pass, Kotek needs two-thirds support in both the House and Senate.

Under Oregon’s Constitution, the unique kicker tax rebate is triggered when tax revenues for a two-year budget cycle come in more than two percent above economists’ forecast from the start of the cycle.

Under the plan, \$260 million would go toward seismic upgrades of the Abernethy Bridge on Interstate 205. Those upgrades are part of a transportation package lawmakers passed in 2017, but the bridge work is waiting on the possible implementation of tolling before it moves forward. Kotek said Thursday she’d like to begin sooner.

Beyond the bridge, Kotek is proposing spending roughly \$245 million on an existing “Clean Diesel Engine Fund” to help freight carriers in Oregon transition to cleaner-burning diesel engines. Both California and Washington have strict diesel standards, which have pushed higher-emissions engines into Oregon.

“If you look at Washington and California, they’ve only been able to make their transition because they put a significant amount of resource into it,” she said.

An additional roughly \$245 million would go into a new “Zero Emission Fund,” which would create the infrastructure to help the state transition to zero-emission vehicles, like electric cars.

Both the diesel and zero-emission funds would be subject to annual audits.

Gun control measure expected to return

SALEM (AP) — A multifaceted gun control bill pushed by Oregon Democrats may be dead this session, but advocates and opponents alike are confident it will return.

The *Statesman Journal* reports that Senate Bill 978 was a casualty of the deal that got Senate Republicans to end their four-day walkout and return to the Capitol, allowing Democrats to pass a multibillion-dollar education revenue bill on May 13.

The move to include

SB978 in the trade disappointed gun-control advocates inside and outside the Capitol. The measure would have required safe gun storage; placed liability on gun owners if a gun is stolen, but not reported, and used to injure a person or property; outlawed untraceable and undetectable firearms; granted local authorities the power to regulate firearm access in public buildings; and allowed retailers to set higher minimum purchasing age restrictions.

LETTERS

Continued from page 18

our thoughts, and how she can be of most help to our region. Some wanted her to run again against Walden to assure we have better representation in 2020. Others thought Secretary of State could maintain fair elections and manage fair re-districting after the 2020 Census. Jamie noted her deep connection to rural Oregon as part of her identity and a desire to ensure that rural Oregonians are well represented, in Congress and in statewide office.

Susan Cobb

♦ ♦ ♦

To the Editor:

From a former skidder operator — hard hats off, and a big thumbs up to Goss Logging for the excellent job they have done on the tree removal project on Highway 20.

I’ve driven the road many times just to observe the progress. There’s nothing like seeing a well-oiled crew working the woods. The cleanup on this high-visibility project is second to none. Good job.

Yes, it is unfortunate the many circumstances that led to this. To those who are “heartbroken” and “devastated”: GET OVER IT.

Kris Nirenberg

♦ ♦ ♦

To the Editor:

I just wanted to speak up about a matter that is starting to seriously frustrate me. For the past several nights, I have been repeatedly tailed by police while driving into Sisters. This has been happening so extremely often lately that it feels like it truly is starting to get out of hand.

I am very often out late and come back into town during late hours. I do not believe that I should be tailed for this reason alone. I am also completely sober but it is extremely nerve-racking to have a police officer tail you when you are already so tired and just trying to get home to go to sleep.

I understand they are looking for intoxicated drivers but I do not feel like it is fair for every late-night driver to get the short end of the stick just for simply being out late. I have already gotten pulled over for “going under the speed limit.” Personally I do not think this is a reason to pull someone over. And neither is “weaving a little in your lane.” As long as a driver is staying in their lane and going under

the speed limit, they should not be pulled over.

This is starting to head in the direction of the conservative police state, which I left, where there was extremely strict night patrols and anyone could get pulled over for almost nothing. I hate to see this small town that I truly love and care about heading in that direction.

I am by no means anti-police and think it is nice that they have patrols around town sometimes. But I do not like the frequency at which I am seeing them all the time now and the amount of times I am being tailed. And good lord, the amount of undercover vehicles I have seen lately has also been astonishing. This all just seems a bit overboard and this reaffirms to me that the idea of this small town having an entire police department is ludicrous. Do we really want every car that comes into Sisters at night to be tailed? And do we, as residents, want to feel like we are inches away from a ticket at all times? My vote is no, absolutely not! Let’s keep things reasonable, please.

Sam Davenport

♦ ♦ ♦

To the Editor:

In response to the letter in your May 15 issue in which the writer wrote, in part, “I have never known of a fire started by a bullet,” I feel it is important for people to know the proven fact that bullets have caused multiple wildfires.

Just Google a term such as “fires started by gunfire” and one will find articles such as: “Multiple BLM fires caused by target shooting”; “BLM: Target shooting caused 10 fires so far in our area”; “Guns blamed for sparking some wildfires in West”; “Gunfire caused California wildfire that destroyed 63 homes”; “Fire in the barrel: How shooting causes wildfires.”

I could go on and on and on but I believe I have proved the point that gunfire can, has, and, sadly probably will continue to, cause wildfires.

Rodney Gregson

♦ ♦ ♦

To The Editor:

There was a misprint in *The Nugget* recently.

Kate Aspen / Cowgirls and Indians Resale is not accepting donations for medical expenses.

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