

Field burning bill bogs down in committee

By TOM JACKSON
Of the Emerald

SALEM — A bill increasing the amount of grass seed fields to be burned this summer in the Willamette Valley may be in for some trouble in the House State Government Operations Committee, much to the satisfaction of anti-field burning legislators.

As passed by the Senate, Senate Bill 535 will allow 235,000 acres of grass seed fields to be burned this summer, with no scheduled reduction for future years. The bill reverses a 1975

legislative decision to phase field burning down to 95,000 acres this summer and no more than 50,000 acres after 1977.

But the bill was amended by the committee Tuesday. An amendment proposed by Reps. Brad Morris, R-Medford and Tony Van Vliet, R-Corvallis, will allow 195,000 acres to be burned this summer. The bill also calls for reductions of 15,000 acres per year until 1989, when 15,000 acres would be allowed to be burned.

Van Vliet said the amendments were proposed to remove the threat of a governor's veto, which

Gov. Bob Straub has said he will impose if the bill passes the House with the 235,000 acre limit intact.



Van Vliet added that too much smoke in the Eugene area may cause the federal government to step in to insure federal air quality standards are met.

The amendments were adopted by the committee, but by adopting the amendments, pro-field burning members of the committee may find their hands on a political tar baby.

The situation resulted primarily because of the vote of Rep. Phil Lang, D-Portland. Lang supported the inclusion of the amendment, but was the key vote in turning down a proposal to send the bill to the House floor.

A motion by Rep. Bud Beyers, D-Lebanon, to delete the amendment also failed. So the committee

is now stuck with an amended bill which doesn't have enough support to be sent to the House floor. Unless the bill is further amended, probably to include further reductions in the number of fields to be burned, it may die in committee, leaving the 1975 phase-down plan intact.

More amendments probably will be proposed for the already substantially amended bill. What those amendments will be remains to be seen, but they will probably be proposed in the committee's work session early next week.

Senate tones down LCDC authority; okays compromises after 19 hearings

By TOM JACKSON
Of the Emerald

SALEM — A bill which would tone down the authority of the state's Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) passed the Senate unanimously Tuesday.

The bill, SB 570, was the product of 19 hearings in the Senate Environment and Energy Commit-

tee. Sen. Vic Atiyeh, R-Beaverton, a committee member, said the bill will make the LCDC "a helpful partner instead of a bully."

Atiyeh said the bill was proposed in part in response to a November general election ballot measure which called for the repeal of the state land-use planning law which created the LCDC. Critics of the LCDC say that it is too powerful and does not allow enough local control.

"This is one of those bills which has been discussed since the beginning of the session," said Atiyeh. "The argument in the Legislature has been to amend the law, not to repeal it."

The bill was compiled from a 133-page package of proposed amendments to the law, many of which were the products of compromise within the committee.

As passed, the bill will redefine the state's goals and guidelines, making guidelines advisory rather than mandatory. Local governments may develop their own ways to implement the mandatory statewide planning goals.

The bill also removes the LCDC's authority to take over local government planning if it determines that local government has not complied with the goal. The LCDC has that power under present law, but it has never been used. Atiyeh said it is not "A club over the heads of local governments" and removing it will help create a feeling of cooperation between the state and the local governments.

The bill also revises the appeal process of local decisions. At present, a citizen may appeal a local decision to both the LCDC and the courts. The bill provides that only the courts will have appeal decision power.

The bill also places a two-year moratorium on the adoption of future LCDC goals. Some proposed amendments to the bill had called for legislative approval of future goals and legislative ratification of existing goals, but compromise resulted in the moratorium.

Another provision in the bill requires city annexations to be in compliance with the LCDC goals. Strongly backed by Sen. Ed Fadeley, D-Eugene, the amendment requires city annexations to be tested against the goal rather than against local plans to insure compliance with the goals.

The bill will now go to the House for consideration.

Search continues for finance reform

By MARY BETH BOWEN
Of the Emerald

SALEM — One of the reasons the Legislature is having such a difficult time with the school finance issue is because no one understands it.

With that in mind, here is the latest on the continuing drama of 90 legislators in Search of a School Finance Reform Package.

At the heart of the school finance reform controversy is the ambiguous term, "equalization." Equalization is what happens when money is paid to property poor districts, rather than property rich districts.

The property poor districts get it because it is more expensive for them to send their kids to school. To raise the same amount of money, people living in property poor districts must pay a higher tax rate for school support than citizens in property rich districts.

Currently, Oregon pays 29 per cent of public school costs. The Legislature already has approved boosting the support level to 34 per cent for 1977-78 and still is haggling over a 34-to-40 per cent support level for 1978-79.

Of the tax dollar the state contributes to basic school support, 80 per cent is spent on per pupil grants (distributed according to the number of pupils a district has) and 20 per cent is spent on equalization.

But a majority of House members voted to change that 80/20 split to 67/33 and approved House Bill 3209, which is being considered by the Senate Revenue and School Finance Committee.

But Sen. Pres. Jason Boe, D-Reedsport, told the committee Tuesday he thinks a 75/25 per cent split would be a more "reasonable compromise," along with a 40 per cent school support level.

But Boe may have trouble convincing the House to approve the 40 per cent level without a larger equalization ratio. Many House members feel that increasing the level of school support without changing the equalization ratio will only entrench the current system and make it more difficult to convince legislators from wealthy districts to adopt a larger equalization ratio in the future.

At Tuesday's meeting Boe said he opposed HB 3209 for two reasons: first, if the 40 per cent level is adopted, some districts won't receive as much money under the 67/33 split as they would under the current 80/20 split. Second, the bill has a provision that would limit the amount of basic school support funds a district could receive once it had reached its per/pupil expenditure limit. Boe contended this provision could lead to a situation where districts that aren't eligible for additional school support funds would oppose increasing the level of school support.

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House approves DMSO use

Oregon may soon be the American testing ground for a versatile drug developed 15 years ago by Dr. Stanley Jacobs, a University professor working at the Health Sciences Center in Portland.

The House voted 56-0 Tuesday to approve the sale and manufacture of DMSO in the state. Rep. Dave Frohnmayer, R-Eugene, was the only person to speak on the bill and said it allows the "careful use of DMSO."

The measure, SB 446 goes back to the Senate for concurrence in House amendments. It has already passed the Senate. If the bill is signed by the governor, Oregon will become the first state in the nation to approve the drug.

The many uses for dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO) include quelling muscle pains caused by arthritis, bursitis and rheumatism, slowing skin diseases and increasing the penetrating power of anti-cancer drugs. A study performed at the Pearl Buck center for the mentally retarded in Eugene showed DMSO speeded up the learning processes of some patients.

Citing a federal law banning the drug, Frohnmayer said the bill provides that it may only be used if manufactured in the state for use in Oregon.

The (FDA) has approved DMSO for use on animals, but refuses to approve it for human use, par-

tially because of tests in 1965 that indicated that the drug altered the lenses of laboratory rabbits. Subsequent testing has shown that the same effect isn't discernable in humans.

Jacob came to the defense of the drug he accidentally unleashed by presenting the facts revealed in the many years of research he has directed on the drug in his testimony before the Senate. DMSO was used as an industrial cleaner by Crown Zellerbach Corp., when Jacobs accidentally spilled some on his unprotected hands during an experiment and minutes later tasted oysters in his mouth, which was the penetrating power of the drug taking effect. The event promoted further investigation.

Jacobs is refusing interviews until after the drug is approved by the FDA. Reportedly, Jacobs himself uses DMSO to quell personal ailments. His office reeks of the characteristic oysterish smell.

Jacobs recommended the drug not be used by pregnant women. He said the drug leaves a skin odor and can induce nausea, penetrating all body parts except teeth and fingernails, which is why it is highly suitable for skin and muscle disorders.

Since he developed the drug, Jacobs has acted as the "national clearinghouse" for the 2,000 experiments that have been performed with DMSO.