

Rajneesh foes sustain efforts

(AP) — Foes of Indian guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh are proceeding with plans for last-minute voter registrations in Wasco County despite warnings from state officials that such registrations are illegal, an organizer said Monday.

Meanwhile, Democratic congressional candidate Larryann Willis of Vale filed a complaint Monday with the Federal Election Commission alleging the Rajneeshes are violating federal election law by packing homeless people into Rajneeshpuram.

Joanne Boies of Albany, a leader of a loosely knit group of Rajneesh opponents, said her group wants several thousand people from around Oregon to register to vote to keep the Rajneeshes from "taking over the county" in the November elections.

The 1,700 residents of Rajneeshpuram traditionally have voted as a bloc, and the addition of about 2,000 homeless people to the Central Oregon city-commune in recent weeks is expected to add to the sect's voting clout.

Organizers plan to live near The Dalles for a few days so they can register to vote against the Rajneeshes. State officials have warned that the plan is illegal.

Greg McMurdo, deputy secretary of state, said Monday that an Oregon resident may vote only in the county in which the resident actually resides and pays taxes. Violating state election law could result in a five-year prison term and a \$2,500 fine, he said.

He said any effort by anti-Rajneeshes would merely give the sect a chance to challenge unfavorable election results afterward.

Boies, however, said McMurdo's argument "doesn't hold water." She said opponents have as much right to vote in Wasco County as the homeless people being bused there by the Rajneeshes.

Boies said representatives of the Oregon secretary of state and attorney general were expected to attend a Monday night meeting of the opponents in Brownsville, southeast of Albany.

In her complaint to the Federal Election Commission, Willis said Rajneesh corporations violated law by making corporate expenditures to relocate the homeless people in an attempt to influence the outcome of a federal election — her congressional race against incumbent Republican Bob Smith of Burns.

"This may be the single largest independent election expenditure (over \$250,000) in Oregon history, Willis said in a prepared statement."

Steve Sprague, Smith's press aide in Washington, D.C., said Willis' action does not imply the Rajneeshes are supporting Smith.

Sprague said that Smith "has never solicited, never asked for, and has never been promised any help" from the Rajneeshes.

Sprague said Smith "certainly doesn't condone any violation of election laws" but he labeled Willis' action a political move to "paint herself as an

enemy of the Rajneeshes because she expects it will win votes for her."

Smith defeated Willis by more than 31,000 votes in the 1982 congressional race in the 2nd District.

State Rep. Donna Zajonc, Republican candidate for secretary of state, urged Wasco County residents to take advantage of a provision of Oregon election laws that would enable them to challenge the votes of the homeless.

"All that needs to be done is for an individual voter to write a challenge next to the new voter's name in the poll books and indicate that the challenge is based on the person's residency," Zajonc said in a statement.

Oregon solons laud timber bill

WASHINGTON (AP) — Oregon congressional delegates reacted with predictable joy

Monday after the House passed a bill aimed at providing relief to Pacific Northwest companies saddled with high-priced federal timber.

Sen. Mark Hatfield, R-Ore. and the main sponsor of the bill, said the bill doesn't solve all of the wood products industry's problems "but is a vital step towards preventing its collapse."

The biggest question remaining is whether President Reagan will sign the bill.

The administration has opposed the bill, calling it a federal bailout.

Another Oregon Republican, Rep. Bob Smith, called the bill "one of the few bright spots in an otherwise lackluster 98th Congress."

"This bill is the instrument that can save the American timber industry burdened with as much as an estimated \$4 million in projected contract losses," Smith said.

The bill provides a method that allows companies to buy their way out of contracts purchased several years ago at extremely high bids when experts had predicted continued growth in the homebuilding industry. Instead, the industry


collapsed due to skyrocketing interest rates and the market for wood products dropped drastically.

Officials at some of the affected companies have said they will go out of business if they are forced to harvest the timber.

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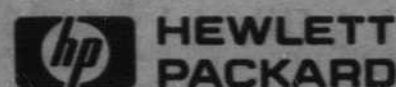
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