

Legislature may repeal law

SALEM (AP) — Bears and cougars take the stage as the Oregon Legislature opens this week.

Lawmakers are considering a bill that would take the unusual step of repealing a law passed by the voters just last November.

Hearings begin Monday before a House subcommittee on House Bill 2584, which would overturn the initiative measure that banned using bait to hunt bear and using dogs to hunt bear and cougar.

Hunters from rural areas are angry about the ballot measure, which passed mostly because of foes in the urban areas.

Foes of the measure say methods such as bait and dogs are needed to control a growing

cougar and bear population.

Supporters of the new law's restrictions argue that hunting methods are unsporting.

Other bills on the subject also have been introduced.

House Majority Leader Ray Baum, R-La Grande, sponsored a bill that would delay implementation of the law for two years. Another bill would refund costs of state bear and cougar hunt tags for hunters who want to turn them back.

Supporters of the initiative measure say the repeal discussion in the Legislature could cause more petitioners to put their measures on the ballot as proposed constitutional amendments.

Constitutional provisions can't

be changed by the Legislature and need voter approval for revisions. More petition signatures are needed to put a proposed constitutional amendment on the ballot than a statutory law.

Other highlights of the Legislature's coming week and summary of last week's major action:

Land Use — The Senate Water and Land Use Committee will conduct a hearing Tuesday on restricting the state's authority to appeal local land-use decisions.

Autos — The Senate Judiciary Committee will hold a hearing Tuesday on allowing forfeiture of autos operated by drunken drivers who have prior convictions for major traffic offenses.

Solvent found in city's water

SPRINGFIELD (AP) — Trace amounts of a solvent believed to have come from a Weyerhaeuser Co. mill have been found in the city's drinking water.

The tiny amount found in a Rainbow Water District well is far below federal standards and poses no risk to the public, utility officials said.

Tim Hanley, superintendent of the Rainbow Water District, said tests in February showed contamination of less than one part per billion.

"That's like a penny in a \$10 million haystack," Hanley said.

Still, Weyerhaeuser said it will pay for all tests on the ground water and wells, and will pay the full cost of any necessary cleanup.

"We want to make sure water quality is protected," said Keith Euhus, environmental manager for Weyerhaeuser in Springfield. "We're concerned about the drinking water supply. By acting now, we can prevent potential impacts."

The Rainbow district provides water to about

6,000 people in north and west Springfield and sells water to the Springfield Utility Board, which serves another 15,000 customers in Springfield.

Steve Loveland, general manager of the Springfield Utility Board, praised Weyerhaeuser for "being very forthcoming" in tackling the problem.

Ground water contamination was first discovered at the site of Weyerhaeuser's mill in June 1993, after the company drilled about 40 test wells as part of an environmental awareness program, Euhus said.

A two-year monitoring program discovered oil, diesel fuel, cleaning solvents and pentachlorophenol, a highly toxic wood preservative Weyerhaeuser and most other timber companies haven't used since the late 1980s.

The company closed its plywood mill in the mid-1980s and its old-growth sawmill four years ago. It operates a pulp and paper mill, a particleboard plant and some logging-related facilities on the 500-acre site.

OCA survey reveals committee rift

ROSEBURG (AP) — A survey of school board candidates' views on abortion and homosexuality has revealed a rift in the Douglas County Republican Committee, with some members alleging the Oregon Citizens Alliance has taken over.

The survey was written by Vice Chairwoman Opal Van Kommer, who also serves as the OCA's county director, and was distributed to 30 candidates last month on behalf of the local GOP.

Mary Ann Winters, a member of the GOP executive board, said

Friday that she knew nothing about it until questioned by a reporter last week.

"See what position you have put me into?" Winters told Van Kommer. "I would not do this you."

Board secretary Kim Free said she also was surprised that the survey went out without discussion or vote. "I feel like I'm very uninformed about what is going on with this board," she said.

Chairman Gordon Coons declined to comment on whether some members are being excluded from the deci-

sion-making process. "I guess I feel like that's Republican business, and I'm not ready to air that laundry in a public newspaper," he said.

Last November, OCA-backed candidates won nine of the 13 spots on the party's executive board. Since then, some GOP insiders say they're concerned the OCA majority is trying to run the party on its own.

"There are a few people making most of the decisions, and we are hearing about it after the fact," Winters said. "For having a vote, I don't have as much of a voice."

Group revives, fights state's land-use laws

(AP) — Rapid growth and an all-out legislative assault on the state's tough land-use laws have led to a resurgence in the 20-year-old watchdog group founded by former Gov. Tom McCall.

Membership in 1000 Friends of Oregon has nearly doubled to 3,700 in less than a year.

Credit also can be given to the return of Robert Liberty, the lawyer who in the 1980s helped the group win three-quarters of the cases it took on.

Liberty, 41, left in 1990 to take on consulting work, but missed the fight. He returned last April to take over as executive director.

"Oregon is on the road to San Jose," he says of Oregon's rapid growth. "But if the Legislature gets its way on these land use bills, we'll be on a freeway to San Jose."

Supporters say Liberty has revived the organization.

"Until Robert took over, 1000 Friends had very much drifted away from the limelight, especially outside the Portland area," says Eben Fodor, president of Friends of Eugene.

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