

Appeal Tribune

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Climate Protection Plan approved

Controversial program could increase the price of fuel and consumer goods

Tracy Loew Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Oregon policymakers have approved the state's Climate Protection Plan, which aims to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases and toxic pollutants emitted in the state.

The controversial plan could increase the price of fuel and consumer goods in Oregon. But state officials say

it will pay off in better health for residents and will speed the switch to less-polluting fuels.

Oregon now is the second state in the nation to set enforceable limits on greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels, following California.

"This is a major victory for environmental, climate justice and public health advocates, in addition to everyone and everything who breathes Ore-

gon's air," Meredith Connolly, Oregon Director for the nonprofit Climate Solutions, said.

The complicated program, which will begin next month, was developed in just 18 months.

In March 2020, Gov. Kate Brown signed an executive order directing the state Department of Environmental Quality to develop the plan, using its existing authority. The order came after Republicans twice blocked cap-and-invest legislation, in 2019 and 2020, by leaving the Capitol to avoid a vote.

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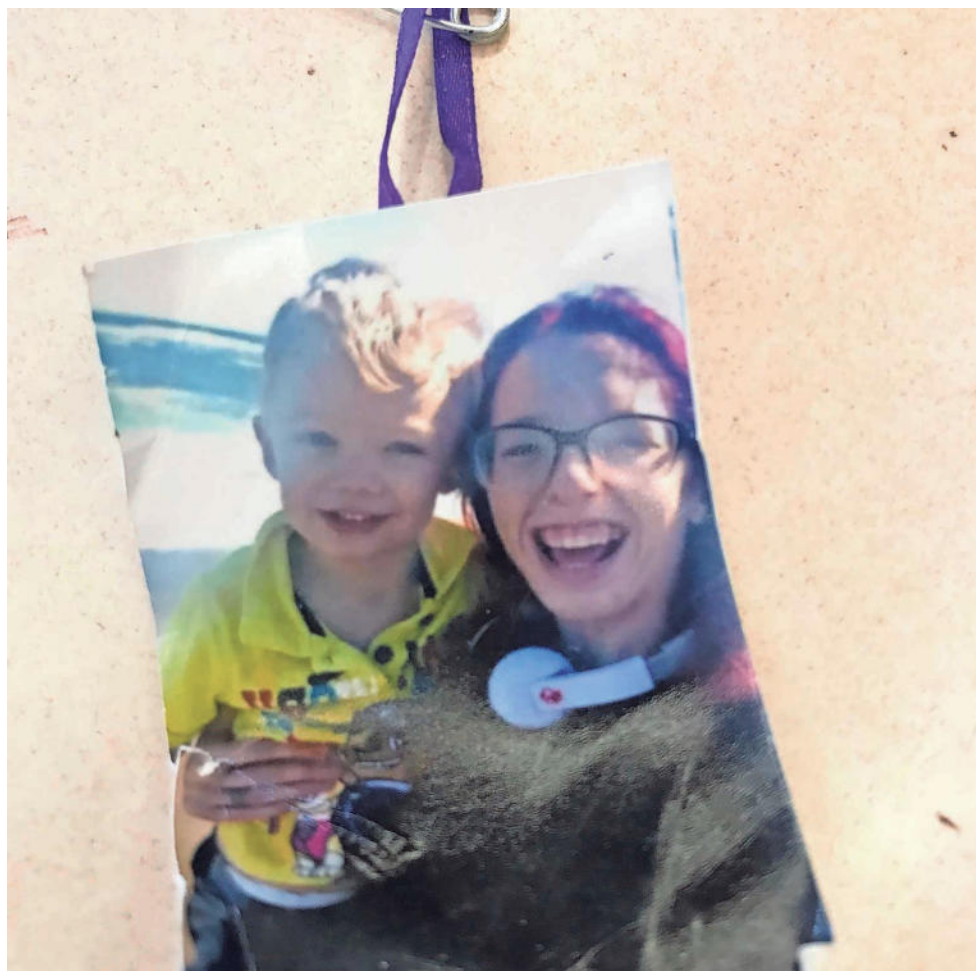


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ANNA REED / STATESMAN JOURNAL

FRETWELL MURDERS CHAPTER I

A life full of promise



Tiny photographs of Karissa Fretwell beaming and holding her son Billy were handed out at their July 7, 2019, celebration of life. CAPI
LYNN/STATESMAN JOURNAL

Capi Lynn, Virginia Barreda and Whitney Woodworth Salem Statesman Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK

This is the first chapter in a four-part series about the life and murder of Karissa Fretwell and her 3-year-old son, Billy.

A wooden plaque with a photograph of Karissa Fretwell and her son, Billy, hangs prominently on a wall in the office at Morrison Campus Alternative School in Dallas. • In one of the classrooms, a drawing of Karissa's childhood home graces the wall next to the bookcase. • She graduated from Morrison nearly a decade ago, but left an impression.

Karissa survived her troubled teen years to become an inspiration for young women and single mothers, working part-time jobs, attending college and caring for a toddler. But she struggled.

When she finally did seek help, it may have cost them their lives.

The disappearance of Karissa, 25, and Billy, 3, in 2019 gripped the community. Two years later, Billy's



Karissa Alyn Fretwell, 25, of Salem, and her three-year-old son, William (Billy) Fretwell were reported missing on May 17, 2019. SALEM POLICE DEPARTMENT

biological father is still awaiting trial for their murders.

Their tragic deaths are only part of their story.

Teenage struggles

Karissa was born in Colorado and lived for a while in North Dakota. She was 14 when she lost her father, whom she called her best friend. Some of her troubles as a teen may have surfaced after his death in 2007.

She moved to Oregon and attended Dallas High

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Accountability from housing agency sought by lawmakers

Connor Radnovich Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Calls for accountability from Oregon Housing and Community Services grew louder during the Oregon Legislature's special legislative session last week, with lawmakers on both sides of the aisle seeking oversight or new leadership at the agency.

Lawmakers were back in the Oregon Capitol to extend the state's eviction "safe harbor" for those who have applied for rental assistance and allot \$215 million in state and federal dollars toward supporting landlords and tenants. Gov. Kate Brown signed all four bills.

Sen. Kayse Jama, D-Portland, and Rep. Julie Fahey, D-Eugene, sent a letter to Secretary of State Shemia Fagan during the proceedings, requesting a performance audit of the agency and its distribution of hundreds of millions of dollars in state and federal rental assistance.

While the pair wrote that they understood the unprecedented pressure the state placed on OHCS during the fallout of the pandemic-related economic recession, they said they are "deeply troubled" by the technical challenges, lack of communication and slow disbursement of aid that plagued the agency.

"We have an obligation to hold agencies accountable for how they implement programs and deliver services – especially when implementation problems could lead to such a potentially tragic result for so many Oregonians," Fahey and Jama wrote.

Oregon Housing and Community Services spokeswoman Delia Hernandez said the agency would be willing to participate in an audit.

"Any type of review or audit is welcome," she said. Meanwhile, top Republicans called for Gov. Kate Brown to replace Margaret Salazar as executive director of the agency and laid the blame at the feet of Democrats for allowing problems to persist.

These issues become only more important to address now, they said, after the Legislature voted to give the agency an additional \$215 million.

"Democrat state leaders have not addressed the numerous errors and mistakes at OHCS that are hurting Oregonians," House Republican Leader Vikki Breese-Iverson, R-Prineville, said in a statement. "House Republicans urge significant changes to these agencies under Democrat control. We call on the governor to dramatically increase oversight to ensure this money gets to real people in need."

An estimated 8,000 Oregonians are at risk of eviction for non-payment of rent due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the state's housing agency has been unable to process their applications within the current 60-day window.

Under the bills – which passed the Legislature with bipartisan support – tenants won't be evicted for non-payment for as long as their rental assistance applications are pending, until June 30, 2022.

The state's slow processing of applications has resulted in thousands of renters being evicted while waiting for the money they and their landlords are due. The state's 60-day "safe harbor" period became law in June and was quickly proven to be inadequate.

See **HOUSING**, Page 1A

Divine Distiller's holiday special this year is Coquito, sometimes referred to as Puerto Rican eggnog. JASON GREENWOOD/DIVINE DISTILLERS



Season's eatings

Em Chan Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

With Christmas and New Years just around the corner, it's the perfect time to get some food gifts to share – or savor by yourself. These local options are perfect stocking stuffers or general gifts for friends and family alike.

And if nothing at this list sticks out as the best present, a good old fashioned gift card or certificate to their favorite restaurant(s) are always a great way to

See **GIFTS**, Page 3A



Oregon state Representatives congregate in the House during a special legislative session at the Oregon State Capitol in Salem.

BRIAN HAYES / STATESMAN JOURNAL

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