

Bills

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“Wildlife trade and trafficking are fueling the rise in diseases that spread from animals to people, and they’re key drivers of the extinction crisis.”

Similar legislation was considered but not approved during the 2021 legislative session, after COVID-19 was identified in mink at an Oregon mink farm. The current bill does not apply to mink farms.

Environmental justice: Oregon’s Environmental Justice Task Force, established in 2007, is made up of volunteers from around the state

House Bill 4077 replaces the task force with a new Environmental Justice Council, with dedicated staff and funding.

The bill directs the council to develop a mapping tool to assess environmental, health and socioeconomic disparities. The tool will layer data such as air pollution emissions, ozone levels and toxic hazards with information such as linguistic isolation and income levels.

“We owe the next generation a healthier, more sustainable and resilient Oregon,” said Joel Ibova Executive Director of Oregon Just Transition Alliance.

Illegal water use: Illegal cannabis operations are using surface and ground water without water rights, depleting supplies for legal agricultural, recreational and other uses. The problem is especially severe in Southern Oregon, according to the Oregon Water Resources Department.

House Bill 4061 prohibits water hauling to unregistered or unlicensed cannabis grow sites, prohibits providing false information to law enforcement or OWRD, and requires certain water suppliers to maintain sales records for at least 12 months, and provide the records to law enforcement or the state on request.

Product stewardship for mattresses: Oregon will be the fourth state with a mattress stewardship program, with the passage of Senate Bill 1576.

The program will provide free collection and recycling of used mattresses throughout the state.

The bill requires the Department of Environmental Quality to certify a stewardship organization to run the program, which will be financed by a fee on mattress sales.

Reach Task Force: As proposed, Senate Bill 1518 would have allowed cities to choose to implement a building code that requires more energy efficiency standards, to help meet the state’s greenhouse gas reduction goals.

An amendment weakened the bill, instead creating a 27-member Task Force on Resilient Efficient Buildings to identify and evaluate policies relating to building codes and building decarbonization.

The task force will recommend legislation to be considered during the 2023 Legislative session. Advocates say they’re confident more progress will be made next year.

“Widespread action is needed to make our existing and new homes and buildings ready for a clean energy future and for the climate crisis,” said Meredith Connolly, Oregon Director of Climate Solutions. “Oregon has fallen behind in innovative policies to improve homes and buildings so they’re more resilient, affordable, and healthy.”

Some bills failed

Some bills that were a priority for environmental groups did not make it through, however.

Wildlife corridors: Drivers in Oregon are more likely to collide with an animal on the road than those in other West Coast states, insurer State Farm says.

The state has five wildlife crossings, compared with 30 in Washington and 50 in California.

House Bill 4130 would have allocated

at least \$5 million in the current biennium for structures to help wildlife safely get across roads. It also would have allowed the state to apply for federal matching funds available through President Biden’s infrastructure package.

While the bill failed, Oregon invested \$7 million in wildlife crossings through the budget bill.

Carbon sequestration: In December, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality adopted its Climate Protection Program, an ambitious plan to reduce the state’s greenhouse gas emissions.

At the last minute, the department dropped provisions for carbon sequestration. In response, legislators introduced Senate Bill 1534, creating the framework to eventually allow natural and working lands to be voluntarily managed for carbon sequestration.

The bill was supported by dozens of climate organizations, small farms and ranches, and water and conservation districts. But many of the state’s major agriculture and forest industry groups opposed it, saying it could lead to new regulatory requirements rather than incentives or partnerships.

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Primary

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use mass media,” Oregon political analyst Jim Moore said. “It’s stunning to me that it has all seemed to be in suspended animation.”

In general, candidates whom politicians consider to be “serious” are those with previous governmental experience and — arguably more importantly — those with a lot of cash on hand. The size of one’s political action bank account isn’t important in and of itself, but having a substantial war chest allows candidates to shape a race to their benefit.

Before the filing deadline, if a candidate already in the race has considerable fundraising success, that alone can discourage potential opponents from contending for the position.

Once campaign season begins in earnest, candidates need to introduce themselves to voters while simultaneously setting themselves apart from their rivals. Much of this comes down to framing: how does a candidate define themselves and how do they attempt to define their opponents.

Money makes this much easier. It pays for highly produced television and radio advertisements, boosted social media posts, mailers, yard signs, billboards and webpages. And in Oregon, there is still no limit on how much money an individual can contribute to a campaign.

As the primary campaign season begins, here is a look at some of the top races:

Three dozen candidates for governor

The last time Oregon had a gubernatorial race this unsettled was in 2002, when the two primaries were fought for by three strong candidates on both sides of the aisle. In total, 11 candidates participated in the election, with future governor Ted Kulongoski receiving less than 50% of the vote in his primary and Republican primary winner Kevin Mannix getting 35%.

Two decades later, more than three times that number are in the running to replace Brown — a staggering 17 Democrats and 19 Republicans. Moore speculated the winner of the Republican primary this year might do so with less than 30% of the vote.

“For the first time in 20 years, it’s just totally wide open,” he said. “There’s no favorites. No one’s been anointed as the successor to Kate Brown.”

The Democratic race is considered a two-person contest between former House Speaker Tina Kotek of Portland and Oregon Treasurer Tobias Read. Both have landed noteworthy endorsements and numerous campaign contributions. As of Tuesday, Kotek had about \$950,000 in her campaign account, while Read had about \$610,000.

Things are a bit more crowded at the top of the Republican primary with at least half a dozen candidates with experience, money or both:

- Christine Drazan, former House Republican leader — \$1 million in campaign account.
- Bud Pierce, Salem oncologist and former gubernatorial candidate — \$175,000 in campaign account.
- Bob Tiernan, former Oregon representative — \$1 million in campaign account.
- Stan Pulliam, mayor of Sandy — \$280,000 in campaign account.
- Bridget Barton, GOP consultant — \$410,000 in campaign account.
- Jessica Gomez, entrepreneur — \$110,000 in campaign account.

The full list of candidates for this and every other race can be found on ORESTAR through the Oregon Secretary of State’s website.



Candidates and members of the public watch as the registration for the 2022 elections closes on Tuesday, March 8, 2022 at the Oregon State Capitol in Salem, Ore. ABIGAIL DOLLINS / STATESMAN JOURNAL

Congressional District 6

Oregon was granted a sixth congressional seat for the first time during the nationwide redistricting process last year, and 15 candidates have emerged to become its inaugural representative.

CD 6 encompasses Polk and Yamhill counties as well as portions of Marion County (including Salem), Clackamas County and Washington County.

Six are on the Republican side: Rep. Ron Noble of McMinnville; former Keizer city councilor Amy Ryan Courser; clean energy executive Nate Sandvig; former U.S. representative and state senator Jim Bunn; Dundee mayor David Russ; and U.S. Air Force veteran Angela Plowhead.

Among the Democrats, Rep. Teresa Alonso Leon of Woodburn, Rep. Andrea Salinas of Lake Oswego and former Multnomah County commissioner Loretta Smith are the candidates with the most government experience. But there are a host of well-funded, if inexperienced, candidates also vying for voters’ approval.

Redistricting experts rate the district as leaning Democratic, but outside of the relative toss-up Congressional District 5, CD 6 appears to be the GOP’s best chance at nabbing another spot in the congressional delegation. Oregon voters haven’t sent more than one Republican to the U.S. House of Representatives since 1994.

The new district also has no incumbent, so the name recognition and funding advantages incumbents usually maintain will not apply.

“It’s wonderfully wide open,” Moore said.

Here are the top five candidates in the race when looking at funding, according to Federal Election Commission data. Campaign finance information for federal races is reported quarterly to the FEC; the next report will be on April 15.

- Democrat Cody Reynolds, United States Army veteran — \$2 million in campaign account (from a loan he made to himself).
- Democrat Matt West, Intel development engineer — \$620,000 in campaign account.
- Sandvig — \$185,000 in campaign account.
- Salinas — \$180,000 in campaign account.
- Smith — \$175,000 in campaign account.

Bureau of Labor and Industries commissioner

This statewide race also lacks an incumbent as current BOLI commissioner

Val Hoyle decided to run to represent Oregon Congressional District 4.

It’s also unique as the only nonpartisan statewide position on the ballot this year. All candidates will run in the same primary this spring, but if no one secures more than 50% of the vote, the top two vote-getters will advance to the November general election.

Seven candidates have filed for the position, which is responsible for overseeing the state agency tasked with protecting the rights of workers, enforcing compliance with employment laws, educating employers on wage and civil rights law and promoting workforce development.

The position tends to attract fewer campaign contributions than other contested statewide seats.

The candidates for BOLI commissioner are:

- Casey Kulla, Yamhill County commissioner.
- Cheri Helt, former Oregon representative.
- Christina Stephenson, civil rights attorney.
- Brent Barker, principal broker.
- Aaron Baca, small business owner.
- Chris Henry, truck driver.
- Robert Neuman, general laborer.

Oregon Legislature

In the state Legislature, Republicans hope to at least undo the 18-seat and 37-seat supermajorities Democrats control in the Senate and House, respectively. In the Senate, Republicans have even loftier goals, believing they have a shot at flipping at least three seats to secure a split Senate or even a Republican majority.

They point to Courtney retiring, former Sen. Betsy Johnson stepping down to run for governor, general uncertainty around the new state legislative maps and the prospect of high Republican voter enthusiasm as clear marks in their favor.

“This is the best chance for Republicans to move things around, right now,” Moore said.

The balance of the Legislature could come down to a handful of seats in the relatively purple greater Salem area.

Senate District II

Next January, for the first time since 1999, Salem will not be represented in the Oregon Senate by Senate President Peter Courtney. Five people are running, two Republicans and three Democrats.

Sen. Kim Thatcher, R-Keizer, will square off against small business owner Marcello De Cicco in the Republican primary.

The Democratic race will be among

Anthony Rosilez, executive director of the Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission; Eric Swenson, Woodburn mayor; and Richard Walsh, former Keizer city councilor.

House District 19

With current Rep. Raquel Moore-Green deciding to run for Senate, this race also is without an incumbent but is full of current and former elected politicians.

Only one Republican is running, former Salem city councilor TJ Sullivan. Two current Salem city councilors are competing against each other in the Democratic primary — Tom Andersen and Jackie Leung. Andersen has about \$10,000 in his campaign account, while Leung has about \$20,000.

Adding himself to the mix on Monday was Rep. Brad Witt, who currently represents House District 31 northwest of Portland.

Witt said in October he would not run for reelection because of how his district was redrawn; it is now less favorable for Democrats and he has called the new maps gerrymandered. It is unclear when Witt moved into House District 19. According to the state Constitution, candidates must live in the district they seek to represent for at least one year.

Near the end of the 2021 legislative session, Witt was removed from his position as chair of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources committee after texts he sent to a fellow lawmaker were found to have violated the Legislature’s workplace harassment policy.

House District 21

Five candidates are seeking the seat formerly held by Rep. Brian Clem, who announced his resignation from the House of Representatives in October. Salem City Councilor Chris Hoy currently holds the seat after he was appointed to replace Clem, but does not live in the re-drawn district.

In the Republican primary, long-time Oregon politico Kevin Mannix is running against forklift operator Kyler McNaught.

Among the Democrats, the race is among small business owner and veteran Ramiro Navarro Jr., farm and outdoor store manager David McCall and financial analyst Robert Husseman.

House District 22

Two Republicans and two Democrats will compete to fill the seat vacated by Alonso Leon and her campaign for Congress.

Accounts receivable clerk Karl Emmrich and senior education policy analyst Anthony Medina will face off in the Democratic primary. The Republican race will be between cybersecurity analyst Jim Lowder and former dental assistant Tracy Cramer.

The remaining seats in the greater Salem area won’t have a contested primary on either side of the aisle:

Senate District 10

- Democrat: Sen. Deb Patterson (incumbent)
- Republican: Rep. Raquel Moore-Green

House District 18

- Republican: Rep. Rick Lewis (incumbent)
- Democrat: Jesse Smith, former small business owner and part-time web developer

House District 20

- Democrat: Rep. Paul Evans (incumbent)
- Republican: Dan Farrington, medical consulting business owner

House District 23

- Republican: Anna Scharf (incumbent)
- Democrat: Elise Yarnell Hollamon, Newberg city councilor

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