

# State lawmakers approve permanent ban on offshore drilling

By Sarah Zimmerman  
The Associated Press

SALEM — Oregon state lawmakers on Tuesday overwhelmingly approved a permanent offshore oil drilling ban as the Trump administration forges ahead with a plan that could open up the Pacific coast for petroleum exploration and extraction.

The House voted 47-8 to prohibit drilling and exploration in the state's marine waters, extending a temporary 10-year ban that was set to expire next year. The measure already passed the Senate and will be sent next to Gov. Kate Brown. Brown, a Democrat, has previously spoken out against offshore oil drilling and has pushed for strong climate protec-

tions in the state.

"For generations, Oregonians have defended the environment," said Sen. Arnie Roblan, a Democrat who sponsored the initiative, in a statement. "Any oil drilling off the Oregon Coast could destroy the things we love in the state of Oregon — our pristine public beaches, and the local industries like fishing and tourism that drive our coastal economy."

U.S. states can ban drilling up to three miles offshore but the bill seeks to limit drilling in federal waters farther out by prohibiting state agencies from assisting with offshore oil extraction. Brown previously enacted an executive order banning that activity.

The move comes as the federal government finalizes a plan to open up nearly all federal waters for oil exploration and drilling. An initial draft released in October identified dozens of potential oil leasing sites off the Pacific coast, including one off the coast of Oregon and Washington state.

California, Delaware, Florida, Maryland and New Jersey have bans similar to the Oregon legislation, according to Oceana, an ocean conservation advocacy group. At least eight other coastal states are considering similar prohibitions.

The U.S. Department of the Interior plans to release an update to its offshore drilling proposal in



Elaine Thompson/AP file photo

Oil drilling rig Polar Pioneer is towed toward a dock in 2015 in Elliott Bay in Seattle, Washington. Oregon state lawmakers approved a permanent offshore drilling ban by a 47-8 House vote Tuesday.

the coming weeks, and it could remove previously identified areas of sale.

The oil industry has not identified much commercial potential for oil and gas

in the coastal waters near Oregon and Washington. The Western States Petroleum Association, which represents oil interests in the West, has said there is currently "no oil production or refinement in Oregon, on or offshore."

But Oregon lawmakers say an offshore drilling ban would protect the state's \$2.5 billion coastal economy.

"The potential and irreversible effects of oil pollution on marine ecosystems and maritime economies do not warrant the questionable, short-term benefits that might be gained from offshore oil and gas exploration," said Rep. David Gombert, a Democrat who sponsored the bill in the House. ■

## OREGON IN BRIEF

From wire reports

### Ex-first lady settles with Oregonian over legal fees

PORTLAND — The parent company for The Oregonian/OregonLive has reached a settlement with former first lady Sylvia Hayes that reduces the \$128,000 in legal fees a judge ordered her to pay after her unsuccessful lawsuit to stop the release of her emails.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports terms of the settlement were read into the record of Hayes' bankruptcy proceeding this week.

A judge in the 2015 suit released most of the emails and ordered Hayes to pay legal fees. After the Oregonian filed a lien against her home, Hayes filed for bankruptcy.

Ethics investigators concluded that Hayes abused her access to Gov. John Kitzhaber to land consulting work that paid over \$200,000. The scandal led to Kitzhaber's resignation.

The settlement says Oregonian's parent company will accept \$15,000 to satisfy the debt if paid within one year; or \$20,000 if paid within five years, or \$25,000 if paid within nine years.

Earlier this month, state ethics commissioners rejected a proposed settlement with Hayes for breaking ethics laws 22 times.

### Measles epidemic grows to 78 confirmed cases

VANCOUVER, Wash. — County health officials say

one more person has been diagnosed with measles linked to a Vancouver-area outbreak.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports the total number of people diagnosed in Oregon and Washington due to the outbreak since Jan. 1 is now at 78.

The Clark County Public Health Department says the newest confirmed case is in a person age 30 to 39.

Health officials are also investigating two more suspected measles cases. There are no new locations where people may have been exposed to the disease.

Health officials say three additional people in Oregon who have contracted measles did not get it from the Vancouver-area epidemic.

Measles is a highly contagious virus that spreads through the air and can linger for up to two hours in an enclosed area.

### Legislature considers tweaks to laws to help immigrants

SALEM — Oregon legislators heard testimony on a bill that would prohibit courts from asking defendants about their immigration status, a move advocates said would help encourage immigrants afraid of deportation to participate in the judicial system.

The Statesman Journal reports it's one of a pair of bills advocates said would help apply Oregon's laws equally to immigrants of

various statuses who are experiencing unintended consequences in state courts.

House Bill 2932 would also require a defendant be informed on how a plea might impact their immigration status and give them more time for a plea decision afterward.

Lawyers who testified before the House Judiciary Committee on Monday said they don't believe the question of immigration status is being posed maliciously, but it's one that is having adverse consequences.

Studies have shown crimes such as domestic violence are becoming more difficult to prosecute because witnesses and victims are afraid to testify because of immigration-related consequences.

"This is a very appropriate and uncontroversial law that encourages people to show up for hearings," said Kathy Brady, senior staff attorney for the Immigrant Legal Resource Center based in San Francisco.

California has had this law for decades, Brady said.

Opponents, meanwhile, told lawmakers it was the latest in a string of irresponsible legislation that puts the rights of undocumented immigrants above Oregonians.

It would also make Oregonians less safe, they said.

"Oregon legislators, once again, are going out of their way to shield those that have entered our country illegally," said Cynthia Kend-

oll, president of Oregonians for Immigration Reform.

### Lawsuit claims hospital failed to perform MRI before stroke

ASTORIA — A Washington woman has filed a \$4.6 million lawsuit against a hospital in Astoria contending the hospital failed to perform an MRI before she had a stroke that left her severely disabled.

The Daily Astorian reports the lawsuit filed last week claims Betsy Christensen sought treatment at Columbia Memorial Hospital in April 2017 for neurological symptoms consistent with a potential stroke.

The suit says a doctor concluded a stroke could only be identified by an MRI but the procedure wouldn't be available for two days.

Christensen went home, according to the lawsuit, and returned two days later. The suit says an MRI was ordered and while Christensen was waiting, she had a stroke.

The lawsuit filed last week claims medical negligence.

Hospital chief operating officer Nicole Williams says they can't comment on matters bound by patient confidentiality.

### Two-week standoff ends with Oregon man's arrest

PORTLAND — An Oregon man has surrendered to police following a two-week standoff sparked by a custody dispute.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports that 42-year-old Stephen Adam Cain surrendered peacefully Monday after days of discussions with negotiators from the Douglas County Sheriff's Office.

Court records say an attorney for Cain's ex-girlfriend called authorities March 4 about a custody dispute over their 3-year-old daughter.

Police say Cain told them he considered himself a victim of the courts and barricaded himself and the girl inside his home about 178 miles south of Portland for two weeks while threatening deputies with "lethal force" and booby traps.

Authorities say Cain told them he would keep his daughter inside his home until she turned 18, but released the girl Monday before surrendering.

### Case dropped against Oregon man who drove through protest

PORTLAND — A judge

has dismissed charges against an Oregon man who was accused of hurting a protester when he slowly drove his car through a demonstration.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports that 55-year-old Mark Alan Dickerson was charged with misdemeanor reckless driving and misdemeanor harassment.

Authorities say he caused bruises to the side, shin and hands of Arthuray Dudley during an October 2018 protest in front of a Portland courthouse.

The case was dismissed Monday after Dudley said he was not available to testify throughout the trial's full scheduled time.

Dickerson's defense attorney says protesters were the ones violating the law by impeding traffic, protesting without a permit and beating on Dickerson's car.

A spokesman says prosecutors believed they could prove the charges but could not proceed without Dudley's testimony.

## EOU

Continued from Page 1A

classes as well. Some online students are too far away to ever visit a brick-and-mortar location at all. Those students never meet their professors in person or even walk across a stage to receive their degree — they simply do all their schoolwork and communication online.

Distance education was a lot different before the internet. Lund said students would receive packages containing paper materials, textbooks and VHS tapes of classes that were filmed the week before. In today's electronically-connected world, it sounds like an antiquated way to learn, but Lund said it worked for students.

"It served its purpose at that time for students who could not do it any other way," she said, adding she admired the students who were determined to get their degrees no matter how difficult it was.

Lund explained most students in the program in those days were middle-aged, with families and jobs and no college in their towns.

"Relocating was not an option, so they just were stagnant, and if they had a career or even personal aspirations they were just not able to (earn a college degree)," she said.

The distance learning option changed that, and Lund said it was satisfying to help people achieve their higher education goals when they originally thought they would never get the chance to do so.

Now, the biggest age demographic among online-only students at EOU is 25-39. David Vande Pol, EOU's executive director of regional outreach and innovation, said students who also work full-time may choose online courses because they are more flexible than taking classes in person. But many students take online classes simply because they prefer them.

"Many online students don't need to gain their education online but choose to because they love the flexibility and affordability that online education at EOU offers," Vande Pol said. ■

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