

ORDER

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response to the Legislature adjourning last weekend without passing legislation aimed at climate change.

The order updates Oregon’s existing emission-reduction goals in line with the goals drafted by legislators. She wants a 45% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels by 2035 and an additional 80% reduction from 1990 levels by 2050.

The scuttled legislation would’ve created a market where businesses could buy permits to emit greenhouse gases and sell extras they didn’t need. The legislation would’ve phased in requirements while providing credits and exemptions to low-income families and businesses exposed to international competition.

Unlike the legislation, Brown’s order doesn’t take an economy-wide approach and instead gives direction to specific state agencies.

“Significant change doesn’t have to take the form of a single step,” said Brown at a press conference. “It can happen when several separate actions. And that’s what I’m doing today.”

The 14-page order directs the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

to reduce emissions. The order directs the department to expand the state’s existing low-carbon fuel program, which is designed to gradually reduce emissions from gas, diesel and others. Specifically, the order seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from cars and trucks 20% by 2030 and 25% by 2035.

Partnership for Oregon Communities issued a statement saying that the order gives the governor few options for “blunting the most negative impacts” of her order and gives power to “unelected bureaucrats who will have the authority to regulate virtually every sector of our state’s economy.”

“At the end of the day, her directive could lead to a cap-and-trade style program that is far more sweeping than any proposal contemplated by the Legislature in recent years and will inevitably lead to significant cost increases for consumers and businesses alike, while offering little in the way of meaningful environmental benefits,” the group said in a statement.

Lobbyists for the Oregon Fuels Association didn’t comment on what the order will mean for fuel prices. But in a statement, the association said that it worked with legislators and the governor on the most recent

legislative proposal to protect customers from significant increases in fuel costs.

The new order doesn’t contain the same cost-containment measures, the association said.

“This approach pushes groups like OFA, that have worked to improve the policy, into a firm defensive position,” the statement said. “We are currently reviewing the EO, but are prepared to use any tools at our disposal (including legal means) to protect our small businesses and their customers.”

The order also directs the commission to “cap and reduce” greenhouse gas emission from industrial sources, transportation fuels and other sources, such as natural gas.

Department spokesman Harry Esteve said there were no estimates on what this will mean for consumer prices.

“It’s in the very early stages,” he said. And the order directs the state Public Utility Commission to “consider” measures aimed at rapidly reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Sheeran said that the governor’s office doesn’t have the authority to tell the commission how to make decisions but can direct it to consider the reductions.



Staff photo by Dick Mason

Maureen Kelly, left, and April Curtis work on a sewing project at Tuesday’s repair cafe in Cove.

CAFE

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items for repair — a heater for farm animal water, a hatchet and a shovel. She said she was delighted with the help she received.

Heidi Van Schoonhoven of Cove also brought in a variety of items, including a microwave oven and a retractable leash. She also brought in a smartphone she needed advice for operating.

“I’m getting great tech support. I’m very excited,” Van Schoonhoven said.

Everyone working at the repair cafe also had advice so those they were helping can later do their own repair or upgrade work. They included Dave Felley, who did knife and hatchet sharpening. Felley said anyone can learn to sharpen knives and hatchets, all it takes is practice.

“You just have to do it,” Felley said. “You can’t just read about it (and expect to be able to do it.)”

Cove School District teachers Russel Olmsted and Erich Dressen volunteered at the repair cafe. They teach shop classes. Olmsted said it was a

delight to work with the people who came to the repair cafe.

“We had a fun group of characters show up,” he said.

Donna Rainboth, an EOU education professor who helped organize the repair cafe, was struck with how generous many people were with their time.

“It is amazing, you just ask people and they step up and help,” Rainboth said.

She said it was so successful that a second repair cafe may be conducted later in La Grande. Rainboth said one of the goals of the event was to help people extend the life of items they own.

“We want to keep items out of landfills, to teach people to fix items so they do not throw them away,” Rainboth said.

Van Schoonhoven echoed this sentiment, making reference to “planned obsolescence”, a term referring to the production of consumer goods that are designed to rapidly become obsolete, necessitating that they be replaced.

“We want to circumvent planned obsolescence,” Van Schoonhoven said.



Andrew Selsky/The Associated Press

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown signs an executive order Tuesday ordering the state to lower greenhouse gas emissions, as students look on in Salem. In an end run around Republican legislators, Oregon’s Democratic governor ordered the state on Tuesday to lower greenhouse gas emissions, directing a state agency to set and enforce caps on pollution from industry and transportation fuels.

VIRUS

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It’s unknown how many, if any, of the pending tests and people being monitored for symptoms reside in Eastern Oregon.

“As it gets into some of the specific information regarding the people under monitoring or investigation, we are trying not to identify numbers county by county for confidentiality reasons,” Fiumara said. “We’re really trying to reference state numbers when it comes to that.”

The other cases announced Wednesday were in Polk, Marion and Deschutes counties.

According to OHA, the state is working alongside Polk, Marion, Umatilla and Deschutes counties to identify and isolate any individuals who may have been in close contact with the cases in the last 14 days.

“I know it’s difficult to learn that we are seeing more active community spread of COVID-19, but this is something we’ve been expecting,” said Dean Sidelinger, OHA health officer and state epidemiologist. “It’s a good reminder to take steps to protect yourself, and vulnerable friends and family members,

WHO declares that virus crisis is now a pandemic

ROME — Expressing increasing alarm about mounting infections, the World Health Organization declared Wednesday that the global coronavirus crisis is now a pandemic.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who heads the U.N. agency, said the WHO is “deeply concerned by the alarming levels of spread and severity” of the outbreak. He also expressed concern about “the alarming levels of inaction.”

“We have, therefore, made the assessment that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic,” he said at a briefing in Geneva.

“All countries can still change the course of this pandemic. If countries detect, test, treat, isolate, trace and mobilize their people in the response,” Tedros said.

— The Associated Press

by washing your hands, covering your coughs and sneezes, and staying home if you’re sick.”

Health officials continue to urge all Oregonians to take steps to protect those who are most vulnerable to complications from COVID-19. Those considered “high risk” include adults 60 and older, or anyone with a serious health condition, including lung or heart problems, kidney disease, or diabetes, or anyone who has a suppressed immune system.

The state health department first announced on March 2 that a Umatilla County resident had been diagnosed with a presumptive case of COVID-19

after attending a youth basketball game at the Weston Middle School gym. The confirmed case is also an employee of Wildhorse Resort & Casino.

At the time, it was the third documented case in Oregon and the first in the region.

Three additional samples from Umatilla County residents sent for testing at the Washington State Public Health Lab came back negative March 5.

COVID-19 is characterized by mild symptoms including a runny nose, sore throat, cough, and fever. Illness can be more severe and fatal for some people, and can lead to pneumonia or breathing difficulties.

CANDIDATES

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- Cody Bowen of La Grande is a deputy with the Union County Sheriff’s Office. Bowen has lived in the area for his entire life. After two years as a reserve officer for the sheriff’s office, Bowen took a full-time position. Bowen works with the local schools as a resource officer and anti-drug instructor through his position.

Commissioner

Two candidates have filed to run in the primary for position No. 3 on the county board of commissioners.

- Incumbent Donna

Beverage of Union seeks a second term. Four years ago she defeated an incumbent commissioner. Beverage serves on various boards and committees, including the Grande Ronde Model Watershed, the Union County Chamber of Commerce and Union County Safe Communities Coalition.

Prior to working as a commissioner, Beverage was a UPS driver and held administrative roles including ones with Community Connection of Northeast Oregon and the Department of Human Services.

A second term as commissioner would be Beverage’s last. Union County limits

commissioners to serve two terms or eight years.

- Michael Barry of Imbler is running against Beverage. He the chief of the Imbler Rural Fire Department.

Barry began his work in public service in 1990 with the Oregon Department of Transportation as a local agency liaison and volunteer firefighter with the La Grande Fire Department. He has worked with the Imbler department since 2012. He holds a bachelor’s degree in geology from Oregon State University.

Assessor

Incumbent Cody Varva is

running again to serve as county assessor, the person overseeing land and property value in the county. He is running unopposed in the election.

Surveyor

Incumbent Rick Robinson is not seeking reelection to oversee the tracking and management of property boundaries and land surveys for the county. However, a candidate has filed.

Jeff Hsu is Robinson’s co-worker at BGB Surveyors and has filed for the position. Hsu moved to Union County in 2006 where he joined BGB Surveyors. He has been licensed for 10 years.



Week of March 8 - 14

March 12th - The Angel Fund Spaghetti Feed Fundraiser - Contact RE/Max Real Estate to purchase tickets 541-963-1000

March 14th - Grande Ronde Hospital Foundation Gala - purchase tickets at www.grh.org/gala

April 17th - Tickets on Sale NOW for this year’s Citizen Awards Banquet - call office 541-963-8588 to purchase tickets

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