

House panel ponders linking firearms storage, narrower ban

By PETER WONG
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Legislation that combines proposed requirements for firearms locks and safe storage with a narrower ban on firearms in public buildings is gaining political momentum in the Oregon House.

The House Rules Committee heard a proposal to combine elements of two bills, one awaiting a vote of the full House and a second that has already passed the Senate. If it happens, the House would have to take only one vote, instead of two, on a firearms regulation bill — and the Senate would have to vote only on whether to accept the final version.

“In this legislation we kind of mash them together,” House Republican Leader Christine Drazan of Canby, who sits on the committee, said during a presentation on Wednesday, April 21.

Republicans were already dead set against House Bill 2510, which awaits a vote of the full House scheduled on April 26. The House Health Care Committee advanced it on March 30 on a party-line vote.

That bill would require the storage of firearms with trigger or cable locks, in a locked container or in a gun room. An exception is a Class C violation, which carries a maximum fine of \$500, unless someone under age 18 obtains access, in which case it is a Class A violation with a maximum fine of \$2,000. No jail time is imposed for violations.

Its chief sponsor is Rep. Rachel Prusak, D-West Linn, who has advocated it on behalf of a constituent since her election in 2018. She said she would support it becoming part of a broader bill.

“No one is under the illusion that enacting a safe storage law will stop all gun violence,” Prusak said. “Many responsible gun owners already lock up their guns. The goal of this safe-storage firearms bill is to change the behavior of the portion of gun owners whose careless actions lead to death and injury of others.”

Split view of changes

The Rules Committee proposes to combine it with a narrower version of Senate Bill 554, which passed the Senate on a 16-7 vote March 25. All votes for it came from Democrats; one Democrat joined six Republicans against it, and the rest were



Elaine Thompson/Associated Press, File

Semi-automatic rifles are displayed on a wall at a gun shop in Lynnwood, Washington, on Oct. 2, 2018. Lawmakers in Oregon are considering a gun storage law that would be among the strongest in America.

excused or absent.

The original bill would bar all firearms from state buildings, including the Capitol, and local governments would have the option of barring them from their own buildings. In essence, the ban would apply to the estimated 300,000 holders of concealed-handgun licenses, who are now exempt from weapons bans in public buildings.

The proposed amendment would narrow the scope of the Senate bill.

The proposed ban would apply to the Capitol, but not other state buildings. (State courts, which are often in buildings maintained by counties, already ban weapons by orders of the presiding judges.)

It would allow boards of the seven state universities, 17 community college districts and 197 school districts to bar firearms from their buildings, but not their grounds. Unlike the Senate-passed bill, cities, counties and special districts would not be allowed to bar firearms borne by concealed-handgun licensees.

Sen. Ginny Burdick, D-Portland and a longtime supporter of firearms regulation, said the proposed change goes too far.

“I’ve been in this process a long time, and I understand the necessity for compromise,” she said at a hearing. “But the amended version goes way too far in terms of weakening the bill.”

Though the proposal would still bar firearms inside the Capitol, she said, “In the climate we live in, state buildings need to be included.”

She also said if school boards have discretion to bar firearms from their buildings, their grounds need to be included, “because sports activities can get pretty hot, as we all know, and they need to be covered.”

As passed by the Senate, public sidewalks and streets are excluded

from regulation.

Sen. Floyd Prozanski, a Democrat from Eugene who leads the Senate Judiciary Committee, offered substitute language.

“It only seems appropriate for us to give local control to school boards, community colleges and universities to make the determination what is best for them and their properties, not just their buildings,” he said.

The House committee is considering other amendments, including one by Rep. Brian Clem, D-Salem, that would enable local governments to regulate firearms in public parks. He also proposed an amendment that would do away with state preemption of most local firearms ordinances — a law that dates to 1995 — but conceded it would go nowhere.

Previous killings

Oregon has experienced two notable instances of gun violence in schools.

In 1998, two died and 25 were wounded at Thurston High School in Springfield after expelled student Kipland Kinkel shot his parents to death. Kinkel, who was 15 at the time, is in a state prison. In 2015, an assistant professor and eight students died, and eight were wounded, by a student gunman at Umpqua Community College near Roseburg. The gunman took his own life.

Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum said she has taken part in marches sponsored by Students Demand Action, part of the national group Everytown for Gun Safety.

“This bill makes a clear opportunity for Oregon leaders to show our young people that we hear them and we care about their safety,” Rosenblum said to the committee. “It takes a small but important step in ensuring that Oregonians can learn safely without the threat of gun violence.”



Ellen Morris Bishop/Wallowa County Chieftain, File

Paddlers prepare to embark at Wallowa Lake State Park in August 2020. The Oregon Senate next week considers a bill to safeguard the public from bias and hate crimes committed on public lands. The law would prohibit people convicted of bias crime committed while on state waters or publicly owned outdoor recreation land from entering areas under the jurisdiction of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department for up to five years.

Proposed law would ban bias offenders from public wilderness

By ISABELLE TAVARES
Columbia Insight via AP StoryShare

SALEM — When Chad Brown, Navy veteran and fly fisherman, parked his car before setting out to a river, he never expected he’d return to find his brake lines cut. But they had been.

His apparent offense? Being a Black man fishing in Oregon.

Brown — who recounted his experience with backwoods bias for Columbia Insight in 2020 — was one of more than 20 Oregon residents who testified earlier this month before an Oregon Senate committee on bias they’ve experienced in outdoor spaces.

On April 8, Oregon’s Senate Energy and Environment Committee approved legislation that safeguards the public from bias and hate crimes committed on public lands. People convicted of a bias crime on public lands or waters will not be allowed in those areas for up to five years.

Their permits, licenses and tags would be revoked for the same period for crimes committed while angling, taking shellfish, hunting or trapping.

“There are people in my district who are afraid to go to a state park, to get on a river in a boat,” Sen. Lew Frederick, D-Portland, told Salem’s Statesman Journal. “They believe if someone decides to harass them because of their race, their ethnicity, nothing will happen.”

The Oregon State Police, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Oregon State Marine Board have expressed support for the bill.

“The conservation community cannot be silent on issues of justice, equality and access to the outdoors,” said Kevin Gorman, executive director of Friends of the Columbia Gorge, in a press release. “At a time when hate and bias crimes are increasing around the country, including here in the Pacific Northwest, we can and must do better.”

Outdoor recreation ‘a risky endeavor’

A bias crime, or hate crime, is propelled by bias against someone based on their race, color, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability or national origin. People convicted of a first- or second-degree crime fall under the new bill.

The legislation comes at a time when hate crimes have spiked to their highest levels in more than a decade, according to a 2020 FBI report, and when public attention, in particular, has been focused on hate crimes against members of Asian communities.

In Oregon, reported bias crimes between January and April 2020 rose 366%, according to Oregon Public Broadcasting.

Robin Morris Collin, professor at Willamette University College of Law, testified that public harassment can not only be

harmful to those experiencing the behavior, but to those witnessing it.

“These actions may exclude Black, indigenous and people of color and others including LGBTQI persons, and these effects ripple outward to others who observe and avoid these behaviors,” Morris Collin said. “The combined effect makes public outdoor recreation a risky endeavor for those who do not want to confront these behaviors or the contexts in which they may become vulnerable.”

Next steps

If passed into law, it’s unclear how the bill would be enforced.

But violators can’t roam too far. Oregon is one of 48 states that participate in the Wildlife Violators Compact, according to Shannon Hurn, deputy director of Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

“This Compact allows for the revocation of a license(s) to occur across all of the participating states,” said Hurn during public testimony. “This prevents individuals from just applying outside the state where the criminal act occurred, and continuing to participate and harvest wildlife in other states.”

The bill allows courts to sentence violators to community service, including habitat restoration, maintenance of outdoor recreation facilities and anti-bias training.

The bill is heading to a voice vote of the Senate on Wednesday, April 28.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU !

I-84: Upper Perry to Richland Interchange Bridge Repairs

In 2022, we will be repairing six Interstate 84 bridges at various interchanges in eastern Oregon. The bridges are located between the Exit 256 Upper Perry Interchange (five miles west of La Grande) and the Exit 302 Oregon Highway 86 / Richland Interchange (two miles north of Baker City). To collect feedback about the upcoming project we are holding a virtual open house.

ONLINE OPEN HOUSE April 26 through May 7

<https://odotopenhouse.org/openhouse/i-84-upper-perry-to-richland-interchange-improvements>

Please take a few minutes to visit the site during this time to review our plans, pictures and traffic impacts information, and then let us know if you have any comments.

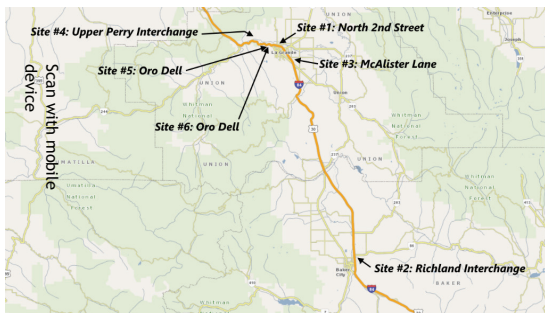
Overview: Each bridge requires repairs and upgrades to fix a variety of deficiencies. We will repair bridge decks and joints, seal cracks, replace bridge and approach rails, and install protective screening. We will design the project this year and construct it in 2022.

We appreciate your review and feedback. It will help us construct a better, safer project.



ODOT is pleased to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you need special accommodations or alternate language formats to participate in this open house event, please contact us (contact information below). Alternate formats available upon request, or call statewide relay at 711.

For more information, please contact Tom Strandberg, ODOT Public Information Officer at 541-663-6261, or email thomas.m.strandberg@odot.state.or.us



UNION COUNTY Weed Control

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Union County wants to help YOU control your noxious weeds!

Thanks to the Weed Levy, the Union County Weed Control Department is offering up to a \$500 reimbursement for treating noxious weeds on your property. This is a 50/50 Cost Share program for qualified applicants, and applies to many different integrated weed management strategies. Weeds required to be controlled in Union County are listed below. Please call us at 541-805-5399, email bclapp@union-county.org, or go to our website www.unioncountyweedcontrol.org for a cost share application and more info.

State of Oregon Laws & Regulations on Noxious Weeds

Oregon Revised Statutes, Chapter 569 — Weed Control (excerpts)

569.180 Noxious weeds as public nuisance; policy. In recognition of the imminent and continuous threat to natural resources...noxious weeds are declared to be a public nuisance and shall be detected, controlled and, where feasible, eradicated on all lands in this state.

What is a noxious weed?

A weed is designated noxious when it is considered by a governmental agency to be injurious to public health, agriculture, recreation, wildlife, or property (Oregon Administrative Law 603-052-1200). Most noxious weeds are non-native plants that are serious pests causing economic loss and harm the environment. Noxious weeds choke out crops, destroy range and pasture lands, clog waterways, affect human and animal health, and threaten native plant communities.

Designation of Noxious Weeds in Union County

CLASS "A" WEEDS

Class "A" designated weed is a **priority noxious weed** designated by the Union County Commissioners as a **target weed species** on which the Weed Control District will comply with a state wide management plan and/or implement a county wide plan for intensive control and monitoring. An "A" rated weed may also be a weed of known economic importance which occurs in small enough infestations to make containment/eradication possible; or one that is not known to occur here, but its presence in neighboring counties make future occurrence here seem imminent.

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|---|---|------------------------------------|
| Musk Thistle | Meadow hawkweed | Garlic Mustard |
| Plumeless Thistle | Mouse-ear hawkweed | Yellow toadflax |
| Turkish Thistle | Orange hawkweed | Myrtle spurge (except residential) |
| Russian knapweed | Yellow hawkweed | |
| Common bugloss | Hoary cress -- Whitetop (within the Grande Ronde or Wolf Creek drainages) | Velvet leaf |
| Meadow knapweed | Perennial pepperweed | Black henbane |
| Yellow starthistle (outside the Cove area) | Giant knotweed | Common tansy |
| Rush skeletonweed | Japanese knotweed | Giant Foxtail |
| Scotch spurge | Himalayan knotweed | Ravenna Grass |
| Leafy broom (greater than 1 mile from the Grande Ronde River) | Hybrid or Bohemian knotweed | Viper's Bugloss |
| King-devil hawkweed | Tansy ragwort | Rose Campion (except residential) |
| | Common crupina | |

CLASS "B" WEEDS

Class "B" designated weed is a **weed of economic importance**, which is both locally abundant and abundant in neighboring counties.

Dog Rose	Leafy spurge (within 1 mile of Grande Ronde River)	Armenian (Himalayan) blackberry
Jointed goatgrass	Hoary cress -- Whitetop	Yellow flag iris
Spotted knapweed	Dalmatian toadflax	Medusahead rye
Diffuse starthistle	Purple loostrelife	Vetena grass-- North Africa
Yellow knapweed	Scotch thistle	grass, Wiregrass
Oxeye daisy (except residential)	Sulfur cinquefoil	Saltcedar
Canada thistle	Puncturevine	Sweet Briar Rose
Wild carrot -- Queen Anne's Lace	Houndstongue	Bittersweet Nightshade

