

# Oregon's congressional delegation backs Russian sanctions

Oregonians told to be ready for economic impacts

By LES ZAITZ

Oregon Capital Chronicle

WASHINGTON — Nearly every member of Oregon's Congressional delegation on Thursday, Feb. 24, condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine and backed sanctions to punish the invaders.

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Oregon and chair of the Senate Finance Committee, said in a virtual town hall Feb. 24 in Eugene that Russia's action was "an unprovoked attack on a sovereign nation based on blatant lies."

He said he supported the "very toughest economic sanctions" against Russia and its president, Vladimir Putin.

President Joe Biden announced a second round of sanctions he said were intended to starve the Russian economy of money.

"We ought to keep pushing those tough sanctions until Putin is practically carrying around his rubles in a wheelbarrow," Wyden said.

By the afternoon of Feb. 24, only one member of the Oregon delegation had not spoken publicly about the international crisis.

U.S. Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Oregon, didn't respond to questions from the Capital Chronicle and had made no comments through statements or on his social media channels. The lone Republican in the Oregon delegation didn't answer whether he supported former President Trump's characterization of Putin's actions as "very smart."

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Oregon, who serves on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said in a statement Feb. 23 that the "reckless military campaign" was "attacking the very foundations of the international order."

He backed sanctions as well.

"I stand ready to exact the most punishing economic costs on Moscow and its leadership that have ever been brought to bear, in concert with our allies," Merkley said. "We must do all we can to support the Ukrainian people, particularly those who are forced to flee their homes. Innocent civilians should not be trapped in the crosshairs. Russia will continue to pay for its aggression."

U.S. Rep. Kurt Schrader, D-Oregon, representing the 5th Congressional District, said in a statement that "Russia's Putin's unjustified attack on Ukraine is being felt deeply in Ukrainian communities in my district and across Oregon."

Biden warned Americans in a speech Feb. 24 that the war would drive up energy and other costs.

Schrader shared that warning.

"All Oregonians will experience the impact of this conflict as it introduces vast uncertainty into critical energy markets that will cost Oregonians at the pump, in the stores due to increased transportation costs, and in the production cycle that relies on these energy sources for materials," he said.

"Russia must be crippled economically, because it is the only thing that the oligarchs that keep Putin in power understand," Schrader said. "Russia must be



Damaged radar, a vehicle and equipment are seen at a Ukrainian military facility outside Mariupol, Ukraine, Thursday, Feb. 24, 2022. Russia launched a barrage of air and missile strikes on Ukraine early Thursday, and Ukrainian officials said Russian troops have rolled into the country from the north, east and south.

cut off from financial institutions, from energy markets, and all oligarch assets and visas should be frozen."

U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici, D-Oregon, serving the 1st Congressional District, said in her statement that "Putin's invasion of Ukraine is dangerous and requires a swift response. I support imposing sanctions, including those announced by President Biden and our EU allies,



Bonamici

to condemn Russia's aggressive actions and to deter further hostilities. We must use all diplomatic and economic tools at our disposal to protect the lives and freedom of Ukrainians."

U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-Oregon, representing the 3rd Congressional District, joined the call for sanctions.

"Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine is unprovoked, unjustifiable, and undermines the most



Blumenauer

basic norms of international law," he said in his statement.

He said that as chair of the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Trade, "I am working to introduce legislation terminating Russia's trade preference status and further restrict their access to American markets."

He said the attack would lead to "the largest refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War." He said the invasion isn't just a distant event for Oregon.

"Putin's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine — an

independent, democratic and peaceful country — is not just an issue of international security, but deeply personal to many of us," he said. "Oregon is home to tens of thousands of immigrants from former Soviet republics, most of whom come from Ukraine. Many of our friends, families and neighbors are of Ukrainian descent or have family in Ukraine. War of any magnitude will have devastating consequences for the innocent people of Ukraine. The number of Ukrainian immigrants and refugees in our state may

soon grow, as individuals and families are forced to flee their homes to escape a bloody conflict they didn't ask for."

Blumenauer said he shared the president's declaration that there would be no deployment of American troops inside Ukraine.

"The United States must use every tool at our disposal, short of armed conflict, to protect Ukraine's independence," he said.

U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Eugene, representing the 4th Congressional District, repeated concerns raised earlier in the week that the president needed to consult Congress about using military force.

"This includes involving any U.S. troops, advisers, trainers, special forces or any other U.S. military personnel in Ukraine," DeFazio said. "The American people, through their representatives in Congress, must have a say before we even think about putting American troops' lives in harm's way or getting involved in yet another foreign war."

He urged continued efforts at diplomacy to halt the Russian aggression.

"Russia's brutal dictator, Vladimir Putin, is a violent thug who is putting his delusions of grandeur ahead of the millions of Ukrainian lives he is now uprooting and putting in danger," DeFazio said.



DeFazio



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