# Washington



Federal Way Sen. Mark Miloscia speaks Jan. 15 in Oympia at a

press conference on legislation to gradually increase Washington's minimum wage to \$12 an hour by 2019. Miloscia was the only Republican to attend. Behind Miloscia are, from left, Seattle Sen. Pramila Jayapal, Kirkland Sen. Cyrus Habib, Tacoma Rep. Laurie Jinkins and Seattle Rep. Jessyn Farrell.

# **Wash.** lawmakers push for higher minimum wage

#### Farm Bureau warns about putting state's producers at disadvantage

By DON JENKINS Capital Press

OLYMPIA, Wash. — Two dozen legislators Thursday

presented a united front and championed gradually raising the state's minimum wage to \$12 an hour by 2019 and annually adjusting the wage for inflation.

"That is a modest increase," said Seattle Rep. Jessyn Farrell at a

press conference. Farrell and other lawmakers argued a higher minimum wage would help the economy.

"Putting money into the pockets of our workers goes right back into our local businesses," she said.

Washington's minimum wage increased Jan. 1 by 15 cents to \$9.47, the highest in the country, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. The wage is adjusted each year based on inflation.

Lawmakers said a higher minimum wage will more compensate workers and make them less dependent on government services.

"By raising the minimum wage, we're responding not only to the worker, but also the taxpayer," said Sen. Pramila Jayapal, D-Seattle.

A bill has not yet been introduced. Farrell said the proposal won't include an exemption for agriculture or provide for a training wage.

"We're not going to leave workers behind," she said.

Seattle and SeaTac have embraced raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. President Barack Obama has proposed raising the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$10.10 an hour. Ten states and the District of Columbia raised their minimum wages in 2014, according to the

"The great news is we're

not raising the minimum wage in a vacuum," Farrell said. "The data is really clear. You typically don't lose jobs because of a minimum wage increase."

Washington Farm Bureau opposes a state minimum wage different than the federal wage because producers compete nationally and internationally, according to the organization's assistant

director of government relations, Scott Dilley.

"Laws that increase wage rates and other employment policies place our farmers at a competitive disadvantage," Dilley said in an email. "Our growers aren't necessarily paid

more for their products in the national and international marketplace, yet their input costs go up.3

Increasing the minimum wage would hurt food processors, according to Northwest Food Processors Association's director of government relations, Ian Tolleson.

"Not only could it raise the price of food, but it will make Washington a less competitive place for expanding current operations here and detour investment of new processing plants," he said in an email.

The proposal will have an uphill climb in the Republican-controlled Senate. The only Republican at the press conference was Federal Way Sen. Mark Miloscia, who was a Democratic lawmaker until he switched parties last year.

Kirkland Sen. Cyrus Habib predicted the minimum wage eventually will be raised.

"We have a fight ahead of us, but I know we're going to win," he said.

Farrell introduced a bill last year to raise the minimum wage to \$12 over three years. The bill passed the House Labor and Workforce Development Committee, but was not brought to the floor for a vote by the full House.

Farrell said she will propose phasing in the increase over three years to give employers more time to adjust.



Rena and Jim Doornink are shown with the Northwest Cherry Growers' Cherry King crown at the trade association's Cherry Institute at the Yakima Convention Center on Jan. 16.

# oornink named cherry king

By DAN WHEAT Capital Press

> YAKIMA, Wash. — A Wapato cherry grower and longtime chairman of the Washington Tree Fruit Research Commission, Jim Doornink, has been crowned 71st king of the Pacific Northwest cherry

> The honor was bestowed by past cherry kings at the annual

Cherry Institute, in Yakima, Jan. 16. Doornink was chosen for years of commitment and service to the industry.

Now 63, Doornink ran his first cherry harvest at his family's orchard when he was 14, thrust into the role one summer morning when the ranch foreman quit. Doornink worked on the

ranch through high school. When attending Washington State University, he would put on his work clothes before leaving Pullman so he could jump right into work the moment he was home, B.J. Thurlby, president of Northwest Cherry Growers, revealed in announcing Doornink's coronation.

"Put simply, our king has a passion for God, family and tree fruit," Thurlby said, also noting his enthusiasm for technology.

Matthew Kotchen,

professor of economics

in the School of Forestry

and Environmental Stud-

ies at Yale University,

studied electricity con-

sumption during daylight

savings time. He found

that, contrary to the stat-

"It's a great honor to get some recognition from the industry you love," Doornink said in accepting the award.

"It's been a great ride and I hope to enjoy it for a long time to come," he said.

He then quickly issued three

That 2015 is the year of the cherry. That it will be a good cherry year and that it won't rain on the crop.

#### Washington reps look to keep daylight savings hours

#### Public testimony given on bill Jan. 22

By MATTHEW WEAVER Capital Press

Washington legislators are asking Congress to allow states to keep daylight savings time hours year-round.

HJM 4001, sponsored by Rep. Joe Schmick, R-Colfax, and Rep. Derek Stanford, D-Bothell, was scheduled for a public hearing in the House Committee on State Government on Jan. 22.

The bill argues that changing the clocks twice a year has a negative impact on agriculture, and an extra hour of sunlight would reduce crime and automobile accidents.

"I've had a number of constituents ask me to start the conversation about this," Schmick said. "A lot of people (get) that extra hour of light and say, 'I feel better if I could spend more time in the natural sunlight."

The health viewpoint is Schmick's primary consideration, more than possible agricultural implications.

"Most farmers I know work from sun up to sun

down — whenever that is, they work," he said. "They're always working the daylight hours any way, and then some." A state could decide to stay

on regular time, authorized by Congress, Schmick said. But staying on daylight savings time year round requires approval by The bill has a big supporter

in Connell, Wash., attorney and tive director of the Washington State Agriculture Legal Foundation.

"Feeding animals in the dark, you don't get as good a look at your animals," she said. "It's very detrimental to agriculture and animal health."



Rep. Schmick

ed goals of reducing electricity, demand for electricity actually Kotchen said the public gen-

erally believes daylight savings time serves an agricultural pur-"Which is tremendously

ironic, because traditionally. farmers have been those most opposed to daylight saving time," he said. "If markets are time, they have to get up an hour earlier in the dark to milk the cows or get their eggs to mar-

People are more likely to use the extra hour at the end of the day to pursue outdoor leisure activities, Kotchen said. He suspects farmers would prefer more daylight in the morning than afternoon, depending on their lo-

Kotchen said it can be costly for locations to not be aligned with the states around them.

"It seems to me that if people in a particular area, particularly in a rural area, want to adjust in ways that are more aligned with the sun, just change the time you open and close your stores, instead of having it be so that the clock in your house is different from what it is in the rest of the country," he said.

If approved, the change is not likely to occur this year.

"You know how fast Congress moves," Schmick said.

But he looks forward to the discussion during the hearing. The committee chair would decide whether to move the bill forward.

It could move and it could die," Schmick said. "I think it will really be a matter of what the committee hears."

## New league chairman: Water project urgently needed

#### Johnson impacted by declining aquifer

By MATTHEW WEAVER Capital Press

The new chairman of the Columbia Basin Development League knows all too well the importance of tapping the Columbia River to replace declining groundwater levels in the Odessa Subarea.

"We have three deep wells that went dry, quit pumping last August," farmer Orman Johnson said. Though his wells may come back for a while this growing season, "the urgency is there

for the league, but even more so for the farmers that are facing situations like we are."

Johnson was elected earlier this month and will serve a oneyear term as the league's chairman. The league supports the development of the Columbia Basin Project.



north of Connell, Wash., and east of Othello, Wash. He raises potatoes, onions, wheat and organic crops with his brother, nephew and son-in-law. Roughly 75-80 percent

Johnson farms 4,000

to 5,000 irrigated acres

of his acreage is impacted by the declining aquifer, he said. Johnson and his family

members decided further drilling of wells would be too expensive, and rented ground with better water access.

"The water you get when

**Online** http://cbdl.org/

you redrill is poorer quality," he said. "It's a million dollars, it's hard to recover costs."

Johnson said problems have

arisen during the last few years, but last year was the first in which his wells went dry.

He has also seen yields decline because of less water availability. He estimates the cost to his operation to be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars each year.

Johnson hopes to soon be able to replace well water with water from the river. Construction is underway in the East Columbia Basin Irrigation District extending the East Low Canal from the river to the farm land. The league hopes to obtain \$25 million to \$30 million in federal funding to continue the project.

Johnson said the league's short-term goal is to speed the process of getting water from the Columbia River to deepwell farmers. In the long term, it hopes to get water to all land slated for development in the original federal Columbia Basin Project. The project currently includes roughly 671,000 acres of the 1.03 million-acre project in east central Washington.

Johnson said 7,000 to 8,000 acres of farm land will receive river water this year.

"Hopefully in 2016 there's some more acres and in 2017 there's more acres being delivered to," he said. "Our biggest hope is to have water being delivered and in the process of expanding to the other acres."

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