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THE TRAVELS OF A TRUFFLE

Those **Valentine's Day** sweet treats and **big blooms** come from around the world — and down the road

By **SIERRA DAWN MCCLAIN**
Capital Press

EUGENE, Ore.—It was two weeks before Valentine's Day, and workers were dipping and dusting truffles at the Euphoria Chocolate Company in Eugene, Ore.

It was like a scene from "The Nutcracker": Chocolate ganache twirled in vats. Smells of cinnamon, cocoa and vanilla danced in the room. Tchaikovsky's "Waltz of the Flowers" was playing.

Feb. 13 and 14 are the company's biggest individual sales days. Store manager Tim Matterson said that in 2019, Euphoria Chocolate sold more than 13,000 truffles for Valentine's Day.

Valentine's Day is big business. Last year alone, U.S. consumers spent a record \$20.7 billion on candy, flowers and food, according to the National Retail Federation.

But behind the flurry of treats and blooms, there are human stories: of drug cartels, hail storms, border agents and beet seed breeders.



Sierra Dawn McClain/Capital Press
Bonnie Glass, owner of Euphoria Chocolate Company in Eugene, Ore., holds a tray of chocolate hearts.



U.S. Customs and Border Protection/James Tourtellotte
U.S. Customs and Border Protection agricultural specialists inspect Valentine's Day flowers for pests at the Port of Miami's cargo terminal.



Sierra Dawn McClain/Capital Press
Jung Houck, a floral worker, organizes shipments for Frank Adams Wholesale Florist in Portland, Ore., just before Valentine's Day.

Around the world

Euphoria Chocolate buys most of its ingredients from Oregon producers, said owner Bonnie Glass. Fruits from Meduri Farms. Hazelnuts from local orchards. Mint from Junction City. Wine from Oregon vineyards. Cream—100 gallons for Valentine's Day—from Lochmead Dairy.

These local flavors mingle with domestic and international ingredients: peanuts dug from soil in the American South, almonds from California trees, cocoa from West Africa. Each represents an industry.

See *Truffles*, Page 13



Moutia Murheb
Kristy Leissle, who follows the cocoa and chocolate industries, leans against a tree with cocoa pods.

Water scarcity incites Oregon legal conflicts

New report details Oregon Water Resources Department litigation

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**
Capital Press

Water demands are growing while supplies are not, creating a dynamic that's ripe for legal conflicts involving Oregon's water regulators,

according to a recent government report.

Irrigators, tribes, environmentalists and municipalities often have competing needs for water, which the Oregon Water Resources Department must often resolve through administrative and court challenges.

"The stakes can be very high," said Tom Byler, OWRD's director, during a Feb. 3 legislative hearing. "In many ways, as scarcity increases, the likelihood of a dispute from one

of these entities increases."

Byler recently testified before lawmakers about a report that explains the 165 contested cases and lawsuits in which OWRD has been a party during the two most recent budget cycles since 2015.

The Oregon Legislature requested the report upon approving the agency's budget last year due to increasing litigation over water regulation in the state.

During the 2015-2017 budget

cycle, for example, 25 new legal challenges involving OWRD were filed, compared to 13 during the 2013-2015 biennium and 4 during the 2011-2013 biennium. The 165 cases detailed in OWRD's report includes older and newer cases.

Due to the upswing in litigation, OWRD exceeded its entire 2017-2019 legal services budget of \$835,000 within a year and had to request emergency funding from lawmakers to cover the full costs.

Of the 165 disputes outlined in OWRD's report, the largest number — 79 cases — involved new water rights applications.

Surface water is often fully appropriated and groundwater also can't sustain further development in parts of Oregon, which can lead to disputes when water rights permit applications are rejected, according to the report.

See *Water*, Page 13

Working-class Oregonians protest climate bills at Capitol

By **SIERRA DAWN MCCLAIN**
Capital Press

SALEM — Thousands of Oregonians from across the state lined the streets and converged on the steps of the Oregon Capitol Feb. 6 to protest legislation they say would decimate the rural economy.

Sign-waving protesters met with Gov. Kate Brown and legislators and filled hearing rooms with their testimonies.

More than 1,000 trucks, tractors and other large vehicles circled the Capitol for hours, their horns blaring. They had come to protest cap-and-trade climate legislation, Senate Bill 1530, which they say could crush their jobs and livelihoods.

The protesters, working-class Oregonians who are part of a movement called Timber Unity, were gathered



Sierra Dawn McClain/Capital Press
Thousands of Timber Unity supporters and members gather in front of the state Capitol to protest the cap-and-trade bill under consideration in the Oregon Legislature. The bill would increase the price of fuel and damage the rural economy, they say.

to stand against SB 1530, also known as cap and trade, a bill to cut carbon emissions in an effort to slow climate change. Protesters say they fear the bill will lead to higher fuel prices, which would hurt truckers, loggers, farmers and others who live and work in rural parts of the state.

"I don't like division between rural and urban areas," said Rachel Abbott, 27,

who works in the hospitality industry and was raised on a farm near Sheridan, Ore. "This should not be a rural-versus-urban issue. It would put my family farm out of business, but it hurts all Oregonians."

The big turnout for the event surprised even its organizers. Lines of trucks paraded around the Capitol from 6 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Timber Unity spokesper-

son Angelita Sanchez said people from Sweet Home, her hometown, brought five semi-trucks to last year's protest but brought more than 40 this morning.

Some convoys formed across the state as early as 1 a.m., said Jenny Dressler of the Oregon Farm Bureau.

Timber Unity was birthed out of the 2019 legislative session in protest of House Bill

2020, the name for last year's cap-and-trade bill. The legislation was intended to slash carbon emissions but faced opposition from many Oregonians, who said high fuel costs would hurt their businesses.

The movement resembles the "yellow vests" in France, a grassroots citizens' campaign that began in protest to fuel taxes and ballooned into a nationwide anti-government movement seeking economic justice for the working class.

Last year's bill passed the House but failed in the Senate. The session ended in legislative chaos; Senate Republicans walked out to deny Democrats a quorum.

This year's bill is similar to the 2019 legislation. By 2050, the Carbon Policy Office estimates the cap-and-trade plan

See *Protest*, Page 5

