

# Apollo Alliance maps strategy for '09 Legislature

Members of the Oregon Apollo Alliance met Jan. 22 to plan strategy for the 2009 Oregon Legislature. The Apollo Alliance is a coalition of union, business and environmental groups that is calling for major government investment in alternative energy as a way to create new high-paying jobs for American workers. The group's Oregon chapter was formed last year.

Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski will be proposing to enact major legislation next year to reduce the state's contribution to global warming. Kulongoski is taking part in the Western Climate Initiative, in which six Western states

and two Canadian provinces are devising a regional approach to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. And Oregon House and Senate committees are meeting this year with business and environmental groups to draft bills that will be introduced when the Legislature returns for its regular biennial session in January 2009.

Oregon Apollo, chaired by Oregon AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Barbara Byrd, wants to ensure that organized labor is at the table during those discussions.

"If we're not at the table raising the issue of jobs," Byrd told the Labor Press, "it doesn't get raised."

By way of example, Byrd points to major legislation the Oregon Legislature passed last year on renewable energy, including a big increase in a tax credit and new mandates for utilities to meet. Labor came late to the discussion, and had little success getting job standards into those laws. As a result, there's no assurance that the investments sparked by those laws will employ local skilled workers at a living wage.

"We don't want to see a lot of money thrown at this problem with no

economic impact in this state," Byrd said. "We can't afford to waste this opportunity."

At the Jan. 22 Apollo Alliance meeting, Jeremiah Baumann from the group Environment Oregon gave union attendees an intro to "cap-and-trade." Cap-and-trade is the regulatory model that's most likely to win approval next year in the Oregon Legislature. A version of it is already up and running in the European Union, and another is about to begin New England, which has a multi-state climate change compact similar to the one the Western Climate Initiative is working to create.

The way cap-and-trade works, government sets a maximum level of greenhouse gases and then issues permits to emitters. About 80 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions Oregonians are responsible for come from transportation and electricity generation. So in the most likely scenario, electric utilities and gas companies would be the ones required to hold permits for greenhouse gas emissions. The allowable limit would go down every year, so that utilities and gas companies would have to do some-

thing to reduce fossil fuel use. But the permits could be traded, so that a market system would determine the cheapest way to achieve the reductions. If government auctions the permits, that could generate resources that can also be used to fund energy efficiency improvements or other priorities.

On the whole, Baumann said, the cost per kilowatt hour would go up under a cap-and-trade system of greenhouse gas reduction, but electricity users' bills would stay the same be-

cause efficiency improvements would reduce the amount of electricity used.

The Oregon Legislature begins a special session Feb. 4. While it's a short session that won't take up major legislation, at least two bills will address climate change. One, sponsored by House Rep. Brad Witt (D-Clatskanie) would retrofit state buildings to improve energy efficiency. The other would spell out more details about a new Climate Change Commission that lawmakers approved last year.

## Labor bowl for MDA to roll April 22


The 19th annual Labor Bowl Challenge to benefit the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) will be held Sunday, April 27, from 1 to 4 p.m. at Cascade Lanes, 2700 NE 82nd Ave., Portland. Registration starts at noon.

Portland area labor unions have collected \$276,041 for the charity since its inception. Money raised from pledges and a silent auction helps provide wheelchairs and braces

for youngsters, medical care, research and summer camps.

Pledge packets are available at the Northwest Oregon Labor Council or by calling Tor at MDA at 503-223-3177.

For more information, call Kelly Pendell, a member of Letter Carriers Branch 82 and coordinator of the event, at 503-493-5903.



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