

...Stimulus bill includes 'Buy American' provision

(From Page 1)
 spending side, put together by the House-Senate Conference Committee, runs 136 pages long. For the most part, it puts new money into existing formulas to increase the local economic impact of federal spending. And it embarks on a federal government building boom and buying spree to stimulate demand for goods.

Under the package, unemployment insurance benefits will go up by \$25 a week. Social Security recipients will get a one-time \$250 bonus. Food stamp benefits will increase 14 percent. All those funds will be spent locally.

More people will be made eligible for Medicaid, the government-paid health insurance program for the poor.

A House-passed provision to let unemployed workers get into Medicaid was scrapped in the final version. Instead, the government will pick up the tab for 60 percent of COBRA premiums. COBRA is the acronym for the law that lets laid-off workers keep employer-sponsored health coverage — by paying for it themselves. Problem is, monthly premiums average \$388 for individuals and \$1,069 for family coverage, while monthly unemployment benefits average \$1,278. Odds are that

many of the jobless still will be unable to afford the insurance.

The package also contains: \$100 billion for local education grants; \$15.6 billion for Pell Grants for college tuition; \$4 billion for job training; \$16.8 billion for energy efficiency and renewable energy; \$11 billion for medical research; \$7 billion for scientific research; \$300 million to buy domestically produced hybrids for the federal government vehicle fleet; and \$1 billion for checked baggage explosives detection systems in airports.

It increases the borrowing authority of Bonneville Power Administration by \$3.25 billion, which the federal power agency will use for new electricity infrastructure in the Pacific Northwest.

It provides \$515 million funding for a "Jobs in the Woods" program to prevent forest fires by thinning overgrown second growth forests. Oregon is likely to get a good share of those funds, and the thinning will make merchantable timber available for milling.

There's \$27.5 billion for highway and bridge work; \$8 billion to build high-speed rail; \$7 billion for water projects; \$6.9 billion for mass transit; \$6 billion for environmental cleanup at former weapon production and energy research sites; \$4.7 billion to bring broadband internet to rural areas; \$4.6 billion for Army Corps of Engineers work; \$4.5 billion to convert federally owned buildings to High-Performance Green buildings; \$4 billion to retrofit public housing; \$1 billion to construct and renovate research facilities, and on and on.

In each case, federal agencies are ex-

pected to spend the money on projects that can begin quickly and result in high, immediate employment. And all iron, steel, and manufactured goods used in any infrastructure project funded by the package will have to be produced in the United States — thanks to a "Buy America" provision that unions, particularly the United Steelworkers, fought hard for.

Labor leaders applauded Congress for taking action, but warned that more will be needed. Laborers International Union President Terence O'Sullivan said the package provides "only a frac-

tion of the \$2.2 trillion our transportation systems, energy systems and schoolhouses need. The plan is a leap forward, but it cannot become a 'we already gave' sign that blocks sorely needed resources, leading to continued deterioration of the basics of our country and our economy."

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) put it this way at the Feb. 16 press conference: "If you're a worker and you've been laid off, you're not in a downturn, you're in a free-fall. This may not show us where the bottom is, but it definitely stops the free-fall."

Business-labor-group to hold lobby day in Salem for LNGs

SALEM — Energy Action Northwest, an alliance of business and labor groups formed last year to advocate for responsible energy development in Oregon and Washington, will hold a "Day at the State Capitol" Friday, March 6, in Salem.

Display booths will be set up in the Capitol's Galleria, and union members will have an opportunity to lobby lawmakers and leaflet passersby about the need for job creation through investment in energy infrastructure projects.

Energy Action Northwest is a proponent of proposed liquefied natural gas terminals and pipelines, including one at Bradwood Landing near Astoria.

"We have ample space for any number of unions that wish to participate in

the lobby day," said Tom Ivancie, director of public affairs. To set up a union booth or to register to lobby, call Ivancie at 503-595-1232 or e-mail him at tivancie@EnergyActionNW.org.

Members of Energy Action argue that building the LNG terminal in Astoria will provide significant short-term economic stimulus without any taxpayer dollars. Additionally, the project will assure continued access to reliable, reasonably priced supplies of natural gas to power the electric grid, the manufacturing sector, and to heat homes.






The lobby day is part of Energy Action's "Truth Offensive" campaign to rebut claims by environmental groups that LNG plants are unnecessary.

Local Motion

January 2009

Union certifications and decertifications in Oregon and Southwest Washington, as reported by the National Labor Relations Board and the Oregon Employment Relations Board

Recognition elections

Name of employer	Date	Name of union	Location	Results:		
				Union Yes	Union No	
Crook County Sheriff's Department	1/6	CC Deputy Sheriffs Assn.	Prineville	16	0	
White Bird Dance	1/7	IATSE Local 28	Portland	8	0	
Kaiser Foundation Hospitals	1/9	SEIU Local 49	Clackamas	14	2	
Albertsons (lobby)	1/21	UFCW Local 555	Roseburg	2	1	
Mercy Flights (DECERTIFICATION)	1/30	Teamsters Local 962	Medford	0	7	

Requests for recognition election

Name of employer	Location
Name of union	Number of employees
Petermann (DECERTIFICATION)	Battle Ground
Teamsters Local 58	146
Safeway	Burns
United Food & Commercial Workers Local 555	46
First Student	Medford
Teamsters Local 962	117
Aramark Linen Service	Medford
Teamsters Local 962	11
Hoodview Vending	Tualatin
Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers	10
Southwest Washington Medical Center (surgical techs)	Vancouver
Office & Professional Employees International Union Local 11	117
Pro-Tec Fire Service	Medford
Teamsters Local 962	117
Providence St. Vincent Medical Center	Portland
Oregon Nurses Association	200

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