

# ...Oregon labor unions oppose cap-and-trade bill

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operate anyway.

Based on that argument, PGE, joined by PacifiCorp and Local 125, testified against Senate Bill 80. SB 80 would have authorized Oregon's participation in a regional cap-and-trade system. The bill was introduced at the request of Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski. The governor's staff has taken part in a year's worth of talks with those of the seven other states and Canadian provinces in the Western Climate Initiative.

The Western Climate Initiative was a response to federal inaction on curbing global warming, but as yet no state has passed laws setting up the cap-and-trade system. Washington Gov. Christine Gregoire was unable to pass enabling legislation, and instead took action by executive order.

Leading the opposition to the Oregon bill was Oregonians for Balanced Climate Policy, formed by Republican lobbyist Mark Nelson. The group is a coalition of over two dozen business groups, plus IBEW Local 48 and the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council.

The Oregon AFL-CIO also

weighed in against the bill, because framers had not heeded the labor federation's call for revenues generated by sale of the emissions allowances to be used to help workers who would be displaced, or for minimum wage and benefit standards for jobs that would be created with public investment.

"They didn't incorporate any of our concerns into the framework," said Oregon AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Barbara Byrd, who has taken the lead on crafting a union response to climate change.

Facing opposition from many sides, the cap-and-trade part was amended out of the bill. Labor leaders met June 1 with co-chairs of the Western Climate Initiative to talk about what kind of cap-and-trade program labor could support the next time the Legislature meets.


Legislators may yet pass two climate change bills, though. SB 80, in its amended version, would give the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and the Public Utility Commission the authority to make rules limiting greenhouse gas emissions. House Bill 2186 would do the same, except applied to vehicles.



## Thousands rally in Seattle for health care reform

Several thousand union members, their families, friends, and allies marched two miles through downtown Seattle May 30 calling for "Health Care for All in 2009." President Barack Obama has put out the call for health care reform this year. "Health care reform cannot wait, it must not wait and it will not wait another year," he said. In response, the Washington State Labor Council teamed up with numerous other organizations advocating for reform — including the Washington Community Action Network and the Healthy Washington Coalition — to demonstrate support for the cause. U.S. Sen. Patty Murray and U.S. Rep. Jim McDermott of Seattle — two key players in discussions over how the U.S. health care system will be changed — addressed the crowd, which attracted bus-loads of unionists from Vancouver, Longview, Spokane, Pasco, Yakima, Bellingham, Mount Vernon, Everett, Centralia, Lacey, and Tacoma. A national rally is scheduled June 25 in Washington, D.C.





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