

# 'Cool Schools' bill passes Legislature

## Labor-backed HB 2690 is a key job creation measure

SALEM — Energy efficiency upgrades in up to 43 schools will create family-wage jobs in hard-hit communities like Pine Eagle, Klamath Falls and Warrenton this summer under "Cool Schools" legislation signed into law June 23 by Gov. John Kitzhaber. Labor-endorsed House Bill 2960

provides access to financing for school districts to fix leaky roofs, upgrade inefficient lighting and heating and make other improvements through the Oregon Department of Energy's Clean Energy Deployment Fund (CEDF). Construction projects will begin this summer.

"Cool Schools is a triple-win for Oregon," said Kitzhaber. "The program will bring family-wage jobs, cost savings, and better learning environments to schools in communities across the state."

Kitzhaber said the average Oregon K-12 public school building is nearly 40 years old, with 14 percent of elementary schools over 60 years old. Utility bills at many of the outdated facilities — often a public schools' second biggest expense — are growing 20 percent every biennium, taking dollars away from the classroom.

Cool Schools puts Oregonians back to work across the state by upgrading these facilities. Kitzhaber estimates every \$1 million invested in energy upgrades could create 10 to 15 jobs.

## ...DeFazio opposes all three trade agreements

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ment and undecided on the other two. U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio vehemently opposes all three agreements. The Korea agreement will finish off the U.S. auto parts industry, he told Labor Press in a phone interview. It will also provide a tariff-free back door for Chinese-made products, he said, because products need only have 35 percent Korean content to get the tariff-free treatment. The Panama agreement, meanwhile, "makes the world safer for drug dealers and people who want to evade taxes," DeFazio said. And the Colombia agreement rewards some of the worst human rights abuses in the world.

"Any sane person," DeFazio said, "would look at this hemorrhaging of

industrial capacity and the international debt we've run up over the last 20 years and say, "This is not sustainable."

U.S. Rep. Kurt Schrader has said he's leaning toward voting for the Korea agreement, will definitely vote against the Colombia agreement, and is undecided on Panama.

And according to her spokesperson, Southwest Washington Representative Jaime Herrera Beutler is "still reviewing the upcoming trade agreements to understand their potential impact on Southwest Washington."



REP. PETER DEFAZIO

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