

# Retirees speak out against proposed TPP trade deal

Two dozen retirees and concerned citizens braved the cold and rain Jan. 12 outside the Portland office of U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden to express their opposition to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). The rally took place just hours before President Obama's State of the Union address, at which he was expected to (and did) push for passage of the TPP trade agreement between 12 countries. More than 20 rallies — sponsored by local chapters of the Alliance for Retired Americans — were held across the country, including one in Seattle.

"It's cold and rainy, but not as cold-hearted as the politicians who support this trade deal," said Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain. "TPP is not a job creator; it is a wealth creator."

Chamberlain said lawmakers can talk all they want about "stronger enforcement rules" in the proposed TPP. "But if it isn't funded, enforcement rules aren't worth the paper they're written on," he said.

Scott Blau (pictured right with bullhorn), president of the Oregon chapter of the ARA, said the TPP "will be bad for jobs and bad for consumers who rely on prescription drugs." He said Americans already pay the highest prescription drug prices in the industrialized world, and that last year prescription drug prices went up by 13 percent — more than eight times the rate of inflation.

"TPP is very likely to add a whole other level to that, because of the way the drug companies will be able to hold onto their patents and not allow generic



(ABOVE) Scott Blau, president of the Oregon Alliance for Retired Americans, speaks out against the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade agreement during a rally Jan. 12 outside the Portland office of Oregon U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden.

drugs to be made, which lowers the cost of drugs," he said. "We are calling on Congress to oppose this agreement that will lock in high drug costs and line the pockets of the pharmaceutical industry."

In Oregon, U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley and U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio, both Democrats, say they will oppose the TPP.



## PEOPLE

### Two from labor tapped for workers' comp committee

SALEM — Kevin Billman of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555, and Diana Winther, staff attorney for IBEW Local 48, have been nominated to the Workers' Compensation Management-Labor Advisory Committee (MLAC) by Gov. Kate Brown.

Brown submitted a list of state board and commission appointments to the Oregon Senate last month. The Senate will consider the nominations Feb. 9.

If confirmed, Billman will replace John Mohlis, executive secretary of the Oregon State Building Trades Council. Mohlis is retiring later this year.

Winther will fill the seat once held by Elana Pirtle-Guiney of the Oregon AFL-CIO. Pirtle-Guiney stepped down last year to accept a job as labor and workforce policy adviser for then-governor John Kitzhaber. She now works for Gov. Brown.

The eight-member MLAC advises the governor and Legislature on workers' compensation-related issues.

## Ritchey retires as business manager of Laborers #335

VANCOUVER — Dave Ritchey has retired as business manager of Vancouver Laborers Local 335. He has served in that post since 2001. His last day was Dec. 31.

Shannon Stull, the local's president, was appointed to fill out the remainder of Ritchey's term that expires in May 2017.

Local 335 has 500 active and retired members who work in private-sector construction, at the public-sector Clark County Health Department, and as federal employees at Bonneville Power Administration.

Ritchey joined the union in 1979 at the encouragement of his father, Bill, who is a retired member of Local 335. After graduating from Washougal High School in 1978, Ritchey was working at a minimum wage job pulling green chain at a nearby plywood mill.

"After joining the union, I



Dave Ritchey

was making twice as much money, with a pension and other benefits," he said.

During his career Ritchey worked on several large projects, including the second power house at Bonneville Dam,

at Crown Zellerbach Camas Paper Mill's modernization project, and on the Spirit Lake Tunnel. The tunnel project involved work under ground shoveling rock and dirt onto a conveyor called "The Mole."

"We would hit underground springs where water would run down the back of your neck," he recalled. "We got so far back underground that you could hardly see the entrance of the tunnel."

Ritchey later returned to Bonneville Dam to work on the juvenile fish bypass. There, he got to work on the same crew as his

father. Ritchey spent 12 years working as a hod carrier for Ballard International. In that job he traveled to paper mills up and down the West Coast working 12-hour shifts during mill shutdowns building high density tanks and chests for pulp storage.

His last job before becoming business manager was as a foreman for Howard S. Wright.

Always active in his union, Ritchey was recruited for the job of business manager. During his tenure he signed 58 new contractors and 76 project labor agreements. Twice he was named "Labor Leader of the Year" by the Southwest Washington Labor Roundtable.

Today, Ritchey is co-chair of the Labor Roundtable. He's not sure if he'll continue in that role. Ritchey plans to do more hunting, fishing and snowmobiling, and is planning a trip across the United States with his wife, Vanessa.

## Eugene City Council votes to oppose Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal

EUGENE — The Eugene City Council voted Jan. 11 to oppose the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) free trade agreement.

The resolution against the trade deal was presented by City Councilor Claire Syrett. It passed unanimously.

Syrett cited the impact of previous trade agreements on Oregon's manufacturing economy, workers' rights, and the environment as she presented the resolution.

"Those of us who were paying attention to these things during President Clinton's Administration saw the terrible impacts of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) on our manufacturing industry as just one example, and negative impacts on communities in other counties that were party to that treaty."

Syrett also explained why it's important for local governments to pass resolutions like Eugene's.

"While adding our voice in opposition may not prevent this from going forward, it will put

this city on record as opposing a treaty that has real potential to harm our local and state economy."

Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain responded to the vote by calling for more cities to pass similar legislation:

"Since the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994, over 50,000 Oregon workers have been certified by the Department of Labor as having lost their jobs due to trade," he said. "It's time for localities, like the City of Eugene did, to say no to policies that ship their citizens' jobs overseas, threaten the rights of workers, and lower the standard of living for all of us. I hope that more local governments see Eugene's example and follow it."

The resolution is a result of local labor and community-based organizations working together as Oregon Strong Voice Lane County, which held a series of actions in the area to call attention to the TPP, including a rally with Congressman Peter DeFazio last spring.