



COURTESY PHOTO

Wyden clears way for coal-supporter Manchin to head energy committee

Fears mount that the West Virginia senator would derail progress on climate change policy, but Wyden signals he'll likely pass on the position

BY EMILY GREEN
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Oregon's Democratic U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden is next in line for the ranking seat on the Senate Energy Committee – a position that would hold tremendous power over which carbon policies and other climate change-related energy bills see the light of day on the Senate floor.

This prospect comes at a pivotal time.

As climate reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and even the federal government are striking an ever bleaker tone, support is building in the House around Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's (D-N.Y.) Green New Deal, which aims to get the U.S. to 100 percent renewable energy and meet the Paris Accord's goal of keeping temperature increases to below 2.7 degrees Celsius. Should Democrats keep the House in future election cycles, and take back the White House and Senate, the ranking member of the Senate Energy Committee would likely control this deal's destiny. But it won't be Wyden making the call. Instead, it will likely be a coal-loving senator from West Virginia, Joe Manchin.

Senators are only allowed to be ranking member on one committee. Wyden and two other senators that would be next in line for the seat after him – Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) – are reportedly uninterested in leaving their current top slots.

This would leave the seat – and power over carbon policy – to Manchin, who is next in line after them. He's known as a staunch fossil-fuel ally who votes with Republicans on some issues, and who shot the cap-and-trade bill with a rifle in a 2010 campaign ad to simultaneously show his support of guns and his state's coal industry.

Given the potentially high stakes of his decision not to take the seat, Street Roots asked Wyden if he would reconsider if it came down to him or Manchin.

This was the full response from Wyden's spokesperson Hank Stern:

"A senator can only be the ranking member on one committee – as ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee, Senator Wyden is well-positioned to work on legislation such as scrapping the tax code's 40-plus subsidies for fossil fuels and replacing them with three provisions that support clean energy options, as well as other crucial issues from reducing prescription drug prices to protecting Medicaid, Social Security and Medicare."

Climate activists demonstrated outside Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer's (D-N.Y.) office Dec. 3 to demand that he not allow Manchin to take the seat should current ranking member Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) leave to become ranking member of the Commerce Committee.

According to Bloomberg, Manchin had lunch with President Donald Trump the same day.



PHOTO BY CELESTE NOCHE

During her photo shoot outside Street Root's office, Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw met up with Street Roots vendors Francine Parks (left) and Nettie Johnson.

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two people.

Sheffield: That's generally what it turns into.

Outlaw: Again, it depends on the circumstances of the situation, the history of the people. But, with all of that said, when you asked about what our procedure is, our training and my expectation in alignment with that training is that once we know what we have, we begin to peel back the resources that we have once we realize either the situation is de-escalated or a threat is no longer present.

Sheffield: And that's what I've always seen in other cities, and other communities, is de-escalation – we gotta control this, gotta pull back a little bit.

To be honest with the stuff I've seen at my campsite, I have yet to see the Portland police do that. In fact, I have seen the opposite. I see more come in once they see it's a homeless person. A good example is the other night at my camp, somebody was talking to my girlfriend and our camping buddies, and he just passed out. And there were four cop cars there before the fire department even got there, and this was more of a medical thing. It was one of my camping buddies who called 911, and he even said on the call, "We need the fire department and an ambulance." Instead, four cops came, and then they called the fire department.

Outlaw: And that's an example of a call where we're dispatched, and ultimately, it was something that should have been handled in another way. And that would be the type of call as well, depending on the rest of the circumstances, where the person sitting in dispatch would be able to say, "No, it doesn't sound like it requires a police

response at this time; this is solely a medical call."

Street Roots Executive Editor Joanne Zuhl: Another (Street Roots) vendor, C.W., wanted to be here. He actually had a housing meeting at 9 'o clock, so it's good he's not here.

I'm going to preface his question, and it's kind of a philosophical question, but it reflects a little bit what you told Oregon Public Broadcasting in that when growing up in Oakland, you felt the police weren't there to help you.

Seven months ago, C.W. was attacked. He's homeless, and he was attacked. He woke up to a guy beating him with a bottle. He called police, and he said he waited about a half-hour – no police. He started packing up his bags. It got to be like 45 minutes; no police showed up. This was downtown, in the Pearl District. He had been assaulted and was bleeding, and he waited at the spot for the police to show up. After 45 minutes to an hour, he left. A couple of blocks away, there were four police officers, and he was just incensed. He wants to know: Do you serve the affluent and the few, or the many and the poor?

Outlaw: Last year, I had just gotten here and immediately delved into our budget asks. When I presented the first time at Council, I attempted to paint a picture of why we needed more officers. I tried to start off with a call – it wasn't allowed to be played – but it was an emergency call. It was a carjacking that had just occurred downtown, near the South Waterfront area, near that 7-Eleven over there, and what I was going to do was play the call, and then leave it.

And then, an hour and 20 seconds later, I was going to step back in after the

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