



Crab Season Opens

But Uncertainty Still Hangs Over Oregon's Coastal Economy



Story by Rusty Savage

Photo Courtesy of ODFW

December brought long-awaited movement back to Oregon's docks as the commercial Dungeness crab season opened along much of the southern and central coast. For fishing families, processors, truckers, and coastal towns that depend on winter crab income, the opening marked a cautious return to work. It also underscored how fragile and unpredictable the foundation of the coastal economy has become.

State regulators approved the commercial season in mid-December for waters south of Cape Falcon after weeks of testing confirmed crab met meat-

quality and food-safety standards. Ports including Coos Bay, Winchester Bay, and Florence saw boats finally leave the docks, providing an economic spark during a time of year when coastal communities often feel the tightest financial pressure.

Crab season remains the single most important winter fishery in Oregon. In a typical year, Dungeness crab generates tens of millions of dollars in landings and supports thousands of jobs when accounting for processing, transportation, retail, and hospitality. For many fishing families, crab income carries them through

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Measure 110

Oregon Rewrites the Rules, Still Seeks Results

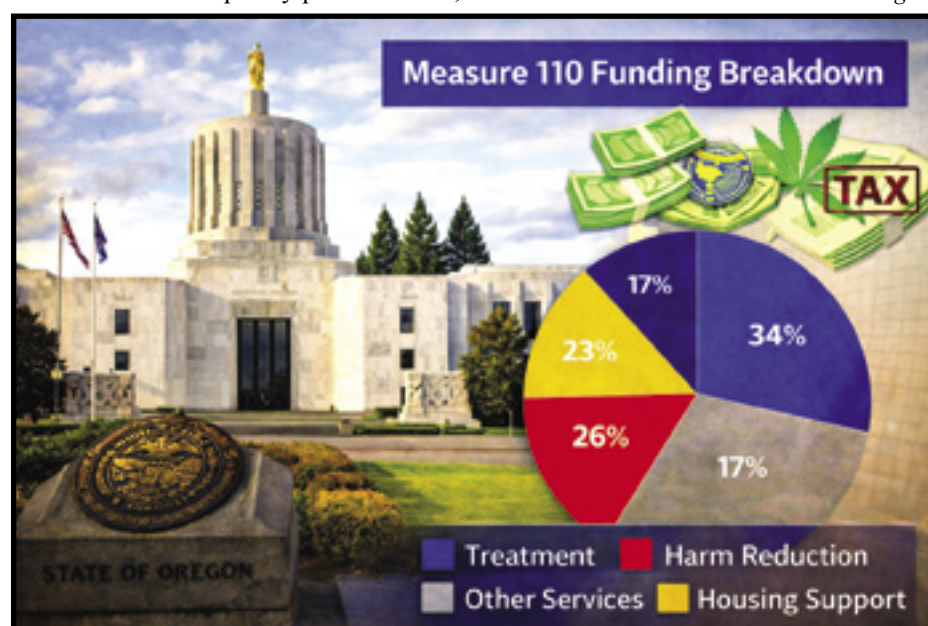
Story by Rusty Savage

When Oregon voters approved Measure 110 in 2020, they agreed to try something few states had attempted: decriminalize possession of small amounts of hard drugs, shift addiction from a criminal issue to a health issue, and fund treatment with marijuana tax revenue. Five years later, the policy experiment is still unfolding — but it has been reshaped by public concern,

legislative action, and hard questions about results.

Measure 110 took effect in early 2021. Possession of small amounts of drugs such as heroin, methamphetamine, and fentanyl was downgraded from a crime to a civil violation, punishable by a citation and a \$100 fine that could be waived by

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Invasive Pests on the Move

Oak Borers and Mitten Crabs Threaten Oregon's Natural Heritage



Story by Rusty Savage

From the forests of the Willamette Valley to the rivers that cut across the state, Oregon officials are tracking two invasive species that pose long-term risks to ecosystems, infrastructure, and local economies. While very different in form and habitat, the Mediterranean oak borer and the Chinese mitten crab share a common concern: once established, they are difficult to control and costly to live with.

State and federal agencies say recent findings suggest both species are no longer isolated curiosities, but emerging management challenges that could shape land and water stewardship decisions for years to come.

One of the most serious terrestrial threats is the Mediterranean oak borer, a small, wood-boring beetle that targets oak trees. Recent trapping efforts conducted

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Oregon Transportation Funding Fight

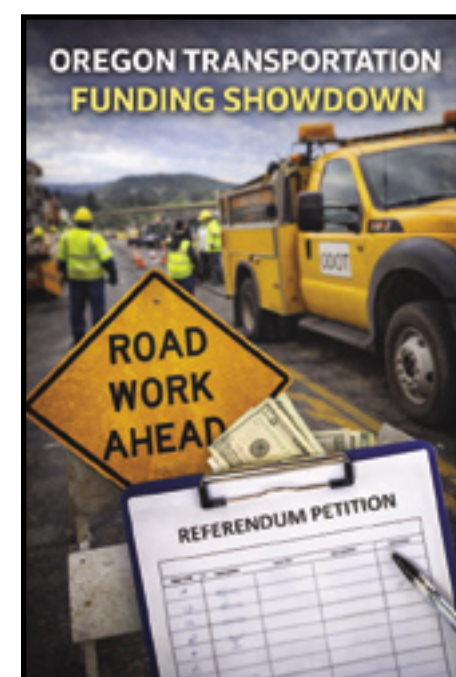
New Developments After ODOT Shortfall Fix

Story by Rusty Savage

Oregon's long-running transportation funding dispute has entered a new and more consequential phase, one that could reshape how the state pays for roads, bridges, and transit for years to come. What began as a legislative effort to stabilize a growing budget shortfall at the Oregon Department of Transportation has now become a voter-driven showdown, with new financial, operational, and political implications emerging as 2026 approaches.

In early December, opponents of a recently passed transportation revenue package submitted enough signatures to place the law on hold and potentially send it to voters statewide. The move followed months of debate over how to address what ODOT has described as a structural funding gap driven by declining fuel tax revenues, rising construction costs, and aging infrastructure.

The legislation at the center of the dispute was designed as a stopgap measure. It combined modest fuel tax increases, higher registration and title fees, and adjustments to other transportation-related charges. Lawmakers backing the plan said the changes were necessary to prevent deep cuts to basic services such as pavement preservation, bridge maintenance, snow



removal, and traffic safety operations.

ODOT officials warned that without additional revenue, the agency could face reductions totaling hundreds of millions of dollars over the next several years. Those cuts, they said, would fall disproportionately on maintenance and safety programs rather than high-profile

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