



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

The new hydroelectric turbine will harness water flowing from Bear Creek Dam.

Dam: City of Astoria may try similar project near Shively Park

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of the estimated high cost of getting the power from windmills near Wickiup Ridge to the electric grid.

The City Council originally approved the hydroelectric turbine project last June but had to consider the project again in January because of a misunderstanding with PacifiCorp. The utility — which operates as Pacific Power in Oregon — had thought it was going to purchase all the power generated by the turbine, according

to the city, then sell what was needed back to city. Instead, the city is using the turbine to cancel out the electric cost for the water treatment system and then selling the excess power to the utility, a process known as “reversing the meter.”

Jeff Harrington, a city engineer, said the pump-as-turbine functions like the opposite of a traditional pump.

“So you plug your basement pump in the wall to pump water out. This is the opposite process,” he said. “It’s taking the water coming

through the pump and generating electricity.”

The turbine project was financed by grants from PacifiCorp’s Blue Sky program, the Energy Trust of Oregon, and the Oregon Infrastructure Finance Authority.

The city, which has entered into a 15-year power purchase agreement with PacifiCorp, may replicate the project in the future at a reservoir near Shively Park.

“It’s going to save the ratepayers money,” Harrington said. SOAR Technologies Inc., the Redmond, Wash., firm be-

hind the turbine, worked on a similar project at Vernon Water Tank in northeast Portland as well as on hydroelectric projects in Washington state, California, Hawaii and Vermont.

Portland has also recently partnered with Lucid Energy on small hydroelectric turbines inside a city water pipeline. The private firm will sell the power generated to Portland General Electric, with the city’s water bureau receiving a share of the proceeds that could help offset costs on ratepayers.



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City Senior Engineering Technician Dean Zeisbrich climbs into a vault containing the hydroelectric generator turbine. The 30-kilowatt turbine, located at the base of Bear Creek Dam, is expected to generate about 154,645 kilowatt-hours of electricity a year.

Betsy: Johnson is a regular sponsor on 30 other bills

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The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) started requiring levee certification after Hurricane Katrina. Certification could cost the city of Warrenton \$11 million. And, if they are not certified, it could cost the average homeowner \$1,500 more for flood insurance annually.

SB 306 made it out of the Senate Committee on Business and Transportation Wednesday, and now sits in the Joint Committee on Ways and Means, where Johnson is the co-vice-chairwoman. The bill is waiting to be woven into the mosaic of the budget, Johnson, said along with its sister legislation, House Bill 2436, which made it out of the House’s Rural Communities, Land Use and Water Commit-

tee and was referred to Ways and Means.

Both pieces come out of the changes to flood control polices following hurricanes Sandy and Katrina; the aging infrastructure, including dikes; and the need to pick up where the federal government left off on paying for its repair. “This is going to be an ongoing state responsibility for a long time.”

Waterfront buildings

Johnson introduced Senate Bill 11, which is in the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, on behalf of Astoria developer and Pier 39 owner Floyd Holcom.

The bill would exempt privately owned structures on state-owned submerged and submersible lands that were constructed prior to Jan. 1, 1916, from lease require-

ments under Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 274.040.

Owners of buildings over state-owned navigable waters often have to obtain leases from the Department of State Lands, which places its lease revenues into the Common School Fund.

“This is an opportunity to exempt historic structures where business owners have made significant investments,” Johnson said.

Johnson and Holcom referenced the long-running debate between waterfront property and building owners and the DSL about how much they should have to pay to the agency.

“The DSL has gone out and tripled our lease fee about midway through our project,” said Holcom, who has been renovating the James O. Hanthorn Cannery since he bought it in 2002 with other

investors — he’s now the lone partner. “When you’re trying to renovate historic buildings on the waterfront, and DSL charges what they want, it doesn’t do good for people trying to renovate.”

Built in 1875 as Astoria’s second seafood cannery, Pier 39 is one of the region’s oldest waterfront structures, including 84,000 square feet of retail, lodging and museum space for the Hanthorn Cannery Foundation. Holcom said he could get a lower DSL lease rate by having his building on the National Historic Registry, but the designation would restrict his ability to renovate it.

“My argument is you shouldn’t have to be on the federal registry,” Holcom said, noting that his structure has been listed with the state

Historic Preservation Office for upward of 50 years.

In addition to chiefly sponsoring 26 bills, Johnson is a regular sponsor on 30 others. For a full list of bills and their statuses, visit the Oregon Legislative Information System at <https://olis.leg.state.or.us>

Among the other bills she sponsors:

- Senate Bill 535 would provide that public body has no responsibility to post warnings related to dangers of the ocean, including but not limited to tides, currents, ocean life and collisions with watercraft.
- Senate Bill 319 would require proprietary authorization from the Department of State Lands to construct or operate ocean renewable energy facility in Oregon’s territorial sea.
- House Bill 2207 would

require vessels with empty ballast tanks to undergo saltwater flushing of the tanks before vessels enter waters of this state.

- House Bill 2209 would create a task force on shellfish.

- Senate Bill 333 would designate March 22 as Tom McCall Day to commemorate the late governor and encourage school districts to educate children about his legacy.

- Senate Bill 627 would exempt timber from city-owned lands of limited acreage from a prohibition against export of unprocessed timber.

- House Bill 2989 would permit someone 18 years of age or older to operate motorcycle without wearing an approved motorcycle helmet, if they have motor vehicle liability insurance that provides personal injury protection benefits.

Kitzhaber: The former Oregon governor maintains the couple did nothing wrong

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An IRS spokesman said that agency does not comment about ongoing investigations.

Kitzhaber resigned last week following a series of reports about Hayes’ work for advocacy groups with an interest in Oregon public policy. He has maintained the couple did nothing wrong.

Jordan told the newspaper he also wanted to elaborate on why he asked Oregon State Police to investigate the disclosure of some of Kitzhaber’s personal emails to a reporter, as well as his reasons for putting two workers for his agency on administrative leave while a separate internal investigation is underway.

Jordan said the two were not placed on leave in connection with the leak probe. Nor were they punished for pre-

serving evidence, he said.

The official also said he wasn’t using the criminal probe as a way to punish the email leaker. He said his job is to protect the state’s records. Jordan asked state police to investigate because the agency has forensic experts and because he had concerns about the agency’s computer security, he said.

The two workers were placed on leave mainly to deal with a situation he felt was “out of control,” Jordan said, including an apparently unauthorized move by one of them to seize computers and cell phones from the governor’s staff as evidence for the federal probe.

Jordan said he was at his home in Canby when an FBI agent and an IRS agent knocked at the door, then questioned him for an hour, focusing on three points.

Two were about Hayes’

work for Demos, a nonprofit that’s one of her consulting clients. The agents asked about emails showing that Kitzhaber urged Jordan to hire a man connected to Demos.

Jordan said he told the agents he didn’t feel pressure to hire the man and didn’t know then that Hayes was being paid by Demos.

The agents also asked whether Kitzhaber’s emails were being preserved. Jordan said they were.

The next day, Kitzhaber announced to Jordan and other senior staffers that he was resigning.

Jordan soon saw the two workers again, when they climbed out of their parked car in the state capital of Salem and handed him a federal subpoena demanding email correspondence sent and received by Kitzhaber, Hayes, and 15 employees — including Jordan.

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