

# Renewable energy bill clears Senate, heads to governor

By HILLARY BORRUD  
Capital Press

SALEM — A controversial bill that requires Oregon's two largest utilities to get 50 percent of their electricity from sources such as wind and solar by 2040 is on its way to Gov. Kate Brown's desk for a signature, after the state Senate voted 17-12 to pass the measure Wednesday.

Brown has suggested that she supports the bill, but has not said publicly whether she will sign it.

The bill also requires Portland General Electric and PacifiCorp to stop using coal power to serve their Oregon customers. Representatives of Portland General Electric and the advocacy group Renewable Northwest told lawmakers last month the bill might actually have a greater impact

on utilities' decisions on whether to replace coal with natural gas, because Portland General Electric already plans to close Oregon's only coal power plant in Boardman by 2020 and stop purchasing coal power from out of state.

## Biomass incentives

At the same time, incentives added to the legislation last week could fire up more power plants that burn wood and garbage. State Sen. Lee Beyer, D-Springfield, said Wednesday that the biomass incentives would lead to job creation in rural areas of the state. But researchers have also raised concerns that wood-burning power plants can generate more pollution than coal. They have questioned the carbon reduction calculations underlying classi-

fication of biomass as a source of renewable energy.

Beyer, who previously served as an Oregon public utility commissioner, said he remembered the concerns raised in 2007 when the Legislature adopted the state's first renewable energy mandate. The bill that the Senate passed on Wednesday would double the existing mandate.

"One of the things I heard a lot at that time was it was going to add significantly to ratepayers rates," Beyer said. The legislation passed on Wednesday allows the utilities to seek rate increases to pay for renewable energy that is up to 4 percent more expensive than traditional sources such as natural gas. Utilities can request those rate increases, which are allowed under the current renewable energy mandate, in addition to

broader periodic rate increases. "We've never gotten close to that cost cap, and it's unlikely we will," Beyer said.

## Republican opposition

That did not quell opposition by Republicans.

The vote Wednesday afternoon followed more than two hours of Republican procedural moves that extended the debate but had little impact on the outcome. Democrats had identified the bill as a top policy priority from the start of the short session, and the utilities and environmental groups also lobbied hard for the legislation.

Much of the controversy around the bill stemmed from news reports that Brown's administration had instructed the state Public Utility Commission not to go public with talking points it had drafted

regarding concerns about the legislation. Public utility commissioners raised concerns the measure would be expensive for ratepayers yet do little to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from coal plants.

"What I do object to is shutting out people who ought to have a full franchise in the discussion about an energy policy like this one," Senate Republican Leader Ted Ferrioli, R-John Day, said during a floor speech Wednesday. "The idea here would be, at least if it's conducted in the Oregon way — the way I like to think of the Oregon way — would be to gather proponents and dissenters together, and hear the best from both of them."

The utilities, environmental groups, renewable energy industry and Citizens' Utility

Board of Oregon drafted the original version of the legislation behind closed doors starting late last year, and that process also fueled much of the criticism of the bill.

After environmental groups failed to get a bill to end coal power passed during the five-month legislative session in 2015, they began gathering signatures to place measures that would accomplish this and other policy goals on the ballot in November. The environmental groups agreed to drop their efforts to get voters to pass several new renewable energy mandates in November, including an initiative that would eliminate coal power, if lawmakers and the governor approve the legislation.

The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.

# College president candidate an experienced administrator

Liss has experience in Ohio, New Mexico, Maryland

By EDWARD STRATTON  
The Daily Astorian

Ron Liss, who has worked in community colleges around the country since 1982, said he has at least 10 more years in his career to give Clatsop Community College, where he visited Wednesday as one of four finalists for the presidency.

Liss, 61, flew in from Cleveland, where he was briefly vice president and special adviser for workforce, community and economic development at Cuyahoga Community College, the largest community college in Ohio.

"What doesn't show on my resume, is I'm unemployed right now," Liss said.

Liss had served as president of Cuyahoga's western campus from 2013 to 2015, but was removed by the college's top president. The change was not performance-based, Liss said, but rather part of a shuffling that included replacement of presidents at three out of the college's four campuses over the past two years. The president told him his new position was temporary, Liss said, which got him thinking about the future.

Liss said he learned about the post in Astoria through the Association of Community College Trustees, which conducted the search for candidates. His wife, Anita, has been an adjunct instructor, along with a bereavement counselor at the Hospice of the Western Reserve in Cleveland. The two have a daughter and a grandchild.

"I'm looking for a smaller institution in a smaller community I can have a personal connection with," he said.

As president, Liss said one of his biggest roles is to represent the college not just on campus, but in the community as well at cultural events and as an advocate locally and at the state level.

After starting his educational career with five years as a high school electronics teacher in Baltimore, Maryland, Liss said he was told about a summer teaching opportunity at Community College of Baltimore County to retrain unemployed workers through the federal Comprehensive Employment and Training Act and quickly became enamored.

"What we do in community colleges is not a step down from anyone," Liss said, adding community colleges are part transfer degrees, part career-technical training.

Liss taught at the Baltimore college from 1982 to 1992 and served in its administration until 1997.

He spent the next decade

in various administrative positions at Montgomery College, in Rockville, Maryland, ultimately becoming director of academic and student services. From 2007 to 2013, he was a vice president for academic affairs at Santa Fe Community College in New Mexico, before joining Cuyahoga Community College.

Originally from Buffalo, New York, Liss said his father was a lawyer and his mother a teacher, adding his family wanted him to go directly to a four-year institution. He earned a bachelor's of industrial sciences from State University of New York, a master's in instructional systems development from the University of Maryland and a doctorate in educational management and leadership from American University in Washington, D.C.

Along with Liss, Glenn Smith, the executive vice provost for student services and enrollment management at Concordia University in Portland, visited this week.

The final two of the four finalists for Clatsop Community College's presidency visit next week. Christopher Breitmeyer, the vice president for academic and student affairs at St. Charles Community College in Missouri, will have a public meet-and-greet from 3 to 4 p.m. March 10 in Columbia Hall Room 221. Christopher Dyer, the CEO and president of the University of New Mexico-Gallup, visits with the public from 3 to 4 p.m. March 11 in Columbia Hall Room 219.

environmentalists sued, seeking to challenge the scientific merits of that decision through judicial review.

But by upholding the delisting decision in state law, the judicial review being sought in the lawsuit would likely be rendered moot, subsequently thwarting the case.

# State Senate approves wolf delisting bill intended to block suit

Associated Press

SALEM — The state Legislature has approved a contentious bill that would uphold last year's decision to remove the gray wolf from the state's endangered species list. The measure intends to block an ongoing lawsuit filed by environmentalists.

House Bill 4040 cleared the state Senate on Wednesday in a 17-11 vote, and now heads to Gov. Kate Brown, whose office has taken a neutral stance on the proposal.

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission delisted the species in November as part of its wolf management plan, and

# Astoria man sentenced for shooting deer inside city limits

By KYLE SPURR  
The Daily Astorian

The 20-year-old Astoria man who unlawfully shot and killed a deer within city limits last fall was sentenced Wednesday in Clatsop County Circuit Court.

James Lee Ogier pleaded no contest to hunting in city limits and recklessly endangering another person. A felony charge of unlawful use of a weapon was dropped as part of the plea agreement.

He was sentenced to 18 months probation. He must also complete 80 hours of community service and forfeit his gun and ammunition. His hunting license is suspended for three years.

Astoria Police were dispatched to Sixth Street and

Olney Avenue early in the morning of Oct. 27 for a report of a gunshot in the area. Officers found a Nissan truck with a dead buck in the bed.

Ogier approached the officers with blood on his hands and claimed he had struck the deer with his vehicle. However, Ogier had shot the deer, gutted the animal and loaded it into his vehicle.



James Lee Ogier

Officers said the backdrop for the gunshot was the nearby Bayshore Apartments, and that Ogier appeared to be intoxicated. At the time, he was arrested for driving under the influence of intoxicants, but was never charged.

His blood alcohol was measured at .04 percent a couple of hours after the incident, according to the Clatsop County District Attorney's Office.

"Intoxicated driving and the



Erick Bengel/The Daily Astorian

Cannon Beach Municipal Court Judge Ronald Woltjer, left, swears in George Vetter as a new city councilor.

# Municipal judge files for Circuit Court

The Daily Astorian

Ronald Woltjer, an attorney and Municipal Court judge, has filed to run for the Circuit Court judge position being vacated by Judge Philip Nelson, who will retire this year.

Woltjer serves as the Municipal Court judge for Warrenton, Seaside, Cannon Beach and is a pro tem judge for Astoria.

The longtime Clatsop County resident has experience in general private law that involved domestic relations, probate, bankruptcy

and criminal defense matters.

He was also an attorney in the Clatsop County District Attorney's Office, where he rose to senior deputy district attorney.

"I believe I have the background and judicial experience to be an effective Circuit Court judge," Woltjer said in a statement. "Judge Nelson set the bar very high with his work ethic, his integrity, and his commitment to treat everyone who comes before the court fairly and with dignity. I understand and appreciate those values and will strive to maintain the high

standards he established."

Woltjer and his wife are the parents of two college-age children who both attended Astoria public schools. He is a former scout leader, community volunteer and is a member of the Oregon State Bar and the Oregon Municipal Court Judge Association.

The other candidates in the May election are Deputy District Attorney David Goldthorpe and Dawn McIntosh, an attorney for a Gearhart firm who used to work as a deputy district attorney in Clatsop County.

# County monitoring flu cases

The Daily Astorian

The Clatsop County Public Health Department is monitoring a large number of confirmed influenza cases and as a result is urging the public to follow preventative health steps.

Influenza is a highly contagious respiratory illness that is most commonly spread through coughing and sneezing.

While most people who contract it experience no more than fever, chills, aches, cough and congestion, the county

health department said influenza causes 200,000 hospitalizations and 36,000 deaths nationwide each year, mostly among people with other health issues.

The public can prevent the spread of influenza by simple steps such as hand-washing and getting a flu vaccine.

Vaccines for children and adults are usually available

at many locations around the county. The Clatsop County Public Health Department also offers vaccines during flu season, generally September through March.

To find out where to get a flu vaccine, the public can contact their health provider or local pharmacy, or call Clatsop County Public Health at (503) 325-8500.

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