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Secretary of State candidate Dennis Richardson. According to the latest DHM poll, Richardson leads Avakian by a margin of 32 percent to 27 percent.

Poll: Measure 97 losing support, Richardson gaining

Corporate sales tax slipping

By **JIM REDDEN**
Capital Bureau

A corporate sales tax measure is continuing to lose support as Tuesday's election approaches, according to a new poll commissioned by FOX-12.

The poll also shows Kate Brown is on track to be elected Oregon governor, so the likely defeat of the Measure 97 corporate tax increase means she'll face a big state budget deficit next year.

The poll, conducted by Portland's DHM Research, shows that 53 percent of voters oppose Measure 97, while just 40 percent now support it. The level of support had been as high as 60 percent in a DHM poll conducted in September, but it had declined to 45 percent by early October.

Measure 97 would impose a 2.5 percent tax on corporations with more than \$25 million a year in Oregon sales. It would raise \$6 billion per biennial budget cycle. Oregon is facing a \$1.4 billion deficit in the next two-year budget.

The fight over the corporate sale tax measure already has broken state campaign spending records. With a week to go before Election Day, supporters had reported raising over \$13 million this year, mostly from public employee unions. Opponents had raised over \$25 million, primarily from corporations. The fundraising record was previously set during the fight over GMO labeling in 2014, when opponents and proponents raised a combined \$29 million.

In another closely watched race, the poll shows Republican Dennis Richardson has an opportunity to break the streak of Democratic dominance in statewide elections dating back to 2002 by defeating Brad Avakian for secretary of state.

According to the poll, Richardson leads Avakian by a margin of 32 percent to 27 percent. Richardson is favored by nonaffiliated voters by a margin of 30 percent to 22 percent. He also has slightly more support from Democrats than Avakian has from Republicans — 12 percent to 9 percent. More than 40 percent of voters are still undecided, however, meaning the final vote could go either way.

In a more predictable result, the poll shows Brown, a Democrat, with a 9-point lead over Republican Bud Pierce in the governor's race. No Republican has been elected governor in Oregon since Vic Atiyeh in 1982.

The winner will serve out the remaining two years of former Gov. John Kitzhaber's term. He resigned amid an ethics scandal in February 2015, and Brown, who was then secretary of state, succeeded him.

Likewise, the poll shows Democrat Hillary Clinton in a strong position to defeat Republican Donald Trump in Oregon. In the presidential race, Clinton is leading Trump by a margin of 41 percent to 34 percent, the poll found. Clinton's 7-point lead is smaller than President Barack Obama's 12-point victory in

Port puts off talk of leaving CREST

Task force has come under fire over dam removal project

By **EDWARD STRATTON**
The Daily Astorian

The Port of Astoria Commission voted unanimously on Tuesday to table discussion on the agency's membership in the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce — after commissioners had opined on the group. Commissioner Bill Hunsinger, who had called for the discussion Tuesday, said not all commissioners had a chance to review materials handed out by Warrenton businessman Pat O'Grady at the last meeting.

O'Grady, who has railed against CREST at Port and Warrenton City Commission meetings, handed out materials regarding CREST, including a report into the recently scrapped Eighth Street Dam removal project. The report, requested by the Warrenton City Commission and performed by Portland attorney Akin Blitz, was critical of the plan by CREST and the Skipanon Water Control District to remove the dam as obsolete.

Hunsinger also accused Jim Knight, the Port's executive director, of campaigning on behalf of CREST, because of recent comments Knight made in The

Daily Astorian. Knight said CREST is rarely used by the Port, but has provided quality work.

CREST has come under heat from commissioners Hunsinger and Stephen Fulton for perceived issues with the group's work on habitat restoration projects at the Astoria Regional Airport and in Warrenton. Fulton has served on CREST's board and works for Warrenton Fiber, a vocal opponent of the dam removal project on the Skipanon River. He has been removed from CREST's board and accused by its chairman — Scott Lee, who is also the chairman of the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners — of serving the interests of his employer in a campaign against the task force.

Before voting unanimously to table discussion on the Port's membership in CREST, Port commissioners spoke about its perceived issues.

"It would seem to me that we have an agency running on real loose reins," said Commissioner James Campbell.

Campbell said an organization with a \$5 million budget should have a board that meets more than four times a year and is more involved in directing the organization. He said the organization seems to do some good, providing technical assistance the Port doesn't have the staff to cover.

Fulton said he agrees with Campbell that four

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James Campbell
Port commissioner

board meetings a year are not enough, and with Hunsinger that all Port commissioners should read O'Grady's materials. Fulton said the Port needs to let the facts come out before making any decision.

"I don't support CREST any more than anyone else," said Port Commission Chairman Robert Mushen, the agency's representative on the CREST board. "But I think resigning from CREST is the wrong way to solve it."

Mushen agreed with Campbell, saying the Port, as a member of the CREST board, needs to help hold the organization's feet to the fire on transparency.

In other news from Tuesday's meeting:

- The Port Commission approved a license agreement to allow the U.S. Coast Guard to repair the taxiway its heli-

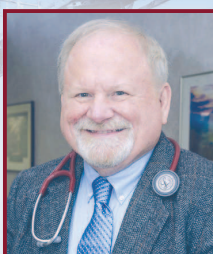
copters use at the airport. The Coast Guard, which leases space for Air Station Astoria from the Port, needed a license agreement in order to spend federal money improving Port property.

- The Port Commission approved a contract for pre-dredging sediment analysis at the West End Mooring Basin. The marina has long faced shoaling, with some boats bottoming out and tipping over during low tides. When asked by Hunsinger what CREST has done for the Port, Knight said the group prepared the sediment analysis plan in preparation to award a contract for sampling. CREST was going to oversee sampling, Knight said, but the Port saved \$5,000 by going with Advanced Remediation Technologies, Inc., out of Canby.

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