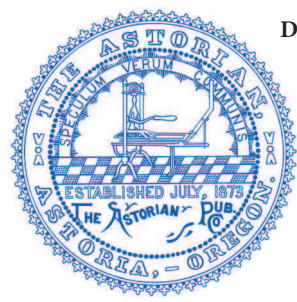


THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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OUR VIEW



Paris Achen/Pamplin Media Group

State Sen. Kathleen Taylor, a Democrat, and Sen. Tim Knopp, a Republican, helped guide equal-pay legislation.

Great example

Pay equity bill sets standard other states should follow

Oregon is setting a national example for ensuring employees are paid equally for performing equal work.

In doing so, Oregon also has shown how Democrats and Republicans can work together. And it happened because of the Legislature's struggles on an unrelated issue — curbing the soaring costs of the Public Employees Retirement System.

House Bill 2005, known as the Oregon Equal Pay Act of 2017, outlaws wage discrimination on the basis of race, sex, disability, sexual orientation, age, veteran status and other protected classes. It allows different pay levels for equivalent work if the disparity is because of bona fide factors such as merit, seniority and quality of a person's work.

And it bars employers from asking for job applicants' salary history before offering a job. That matters because women often have been paid less in the past, and using salary history for a new job can perpetuate that disparity.

The bill, which Gov. Kate Brown plans to sign into law next week, combines enforcement and education. It encourages employers to examine the internal equity of their wages, provides them with legal protections for doing so, but expands penalties for employers who willfully discriminate.

The bill initially was so divisive that it passed the state House in late March on a party-line vote after Republicans narrowly failed to substitute their own version. Yet the final version unanimously passed both the Senate and this week the House.

How could this be?

It stems from good-hearted people being willing to listen, make compromises and not fall victim to ideology.

State Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, gives broad autonomy to his committee chairs instead of ordering them what to do. He also has a knack for pairing the right people to lead committees, which is where most of the Legislature's work gets done.

Kathleen Taylor, a first-term Democratic senator from Milwaukie, and experienced Republican Sen. Tim Knopp, of Bend, did not know each other well before Courtney appointed them to the Senate Workforce Committee.

But chairwoman Taylor and vice chairman Knopp developed a collaborative trust and respect as they worked this year on PERS and other issues. Under the Legislature's deadlines, they ran out of time to resolve PERS, which they shipped off to the legislative budget committee for more work.

Pay equity is a priority for Taylor, and Courtney asked Knopp to work with her on it.

Republican Sen. Bill Hansell of Athena, a member of the Workforce Committee, said Taylor's leadership and Knopp's collaboration were crucial. Little by little, the committee reshaped the measure from a bad bill into a good bill.

The working relationship between Taylor and Knopp was personified by her giving the opening argument for the bill on the Senate floor and his giving the closing argument, Hansell said.

In the House, the bill had elicited considerable rancor. In the Senate, all sides got their say, as negotiations started by finding common ground. Senators talked with House members about their concerns. Misunderstandings and miscommunications were resolved. Blowups and hiccups happened, but no one was willing to walk away from the negotiating table.

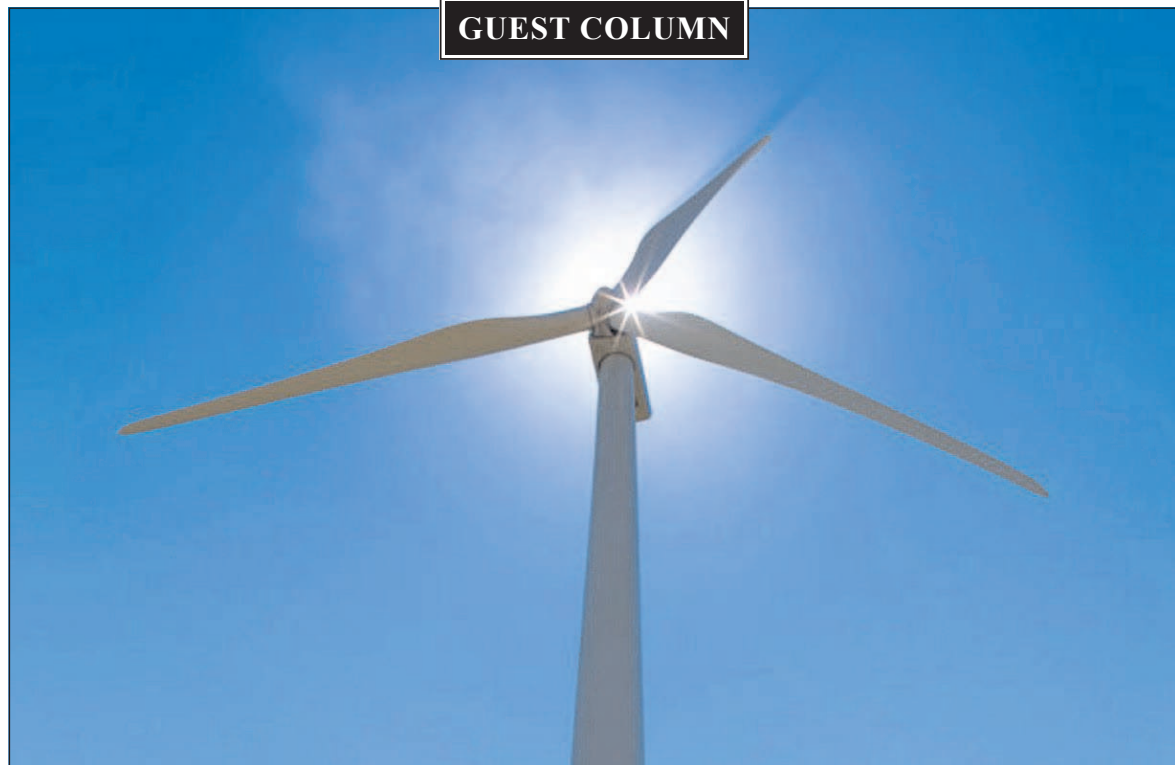
Seeking perfect legislation can be the barrier to achieving good legislation. On the pay equity bill, business and labor — Republicans and Democrats — were largely satisfied that the final version was both effective and reasonable.

Oregon can be proud of its equal-pay legislation.

And equally proud of its legislators, starting with Sens. Taylor and Knopp.



GUEST COLUMN



Pacific Power

Wind energy is part of the focus as Pacific Power moves to reduce its reliance on fossil fuels.

North Coast leads charge toward clean energy future

By ALISA DUNLAP

Special to The Daily Astorian

Across the West, communities, both rural and urban, are asking for cleaner energy that remains affordable. And



across the West, that change is happening. Last week, Clatsop County and local city governments announced a joint effort called the North Coast Blue Sky Challenge that aims to expand the number of local residents supporting renewable power. This extraordinary coordinated effort from Clatsop County, and the cities of Astoria, Cannon Beach, Gearhart, Seaside and Warrenton extends a long, pioneering track record. The countywide challenge to increase our commitment to renewable energy should make Clatsop County only the second county in the nation to take these steps to become a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Green Power County.

The North Coast is joining the front of a movement that has accelerated in recent years. At the turn of the millennium, many thought it would be a stretch for wind and solar to play a major role on the nation's grid, as emission-free hydro power has for over a century. Wind and solar had potential, but many thought them simply too expensive and too difficult to fit into the existing system.

But fast forward to 2017 and you

see an entirely different landscape. Wind and solar can be an important and competitive generation resource.

Just like on the North Coast, energy customers across the region have been clear that they want cleaner, reliable, lower emission energy at affordable rates. Pacific Power hears you. We recently announced a significant expansion of the company's renewable resources with \$3.5 billion in new investments over the next three years. These are investments that will provide more clean energy, and keep energy rates low by reducing overall costs.

About \$1 billion of that involves upgrading or "repowering" much of our existing wind fleet (905 megawatts) with longer blades and newer technology that will let us produce 20 percent more energy from infrastructure already in the ground, while reducing maintenance costs.

Besides repowering our existing wind fleet, our recently announced Energy Vision 2020 plan includes new investments in renewable energy resources and energy efficiency measures to meet future customer energy needs. We will also be adding up to 1,100 megawatts of new wind, primarily in Wyoming, where the wind really blows, by the end of 2020 along with a new transmission segment being built in Wyoming to facilitate the wind expansion. This is on top of the 54 megawatts of new solar power Pacific Power has contracted for in the last year in Oregon alone.

But don't start reaching for your

wallets. Energy Vision 2020 pays for itself and is expected to actually reduce costs over the life of the facilities. A combination of existing federal incentives for new renewable energy, increased power production and advancing technologies will hold the line on energy rates and pay big dividends for the environment.

These investments, on top of our legacy hydropower projects, will greatly increase the amount of zero emission energy serving customers and produce savings at the same time. This is a win-win and represents our continued commitment to both diversify our energy resources and keep your costs low.

Last year, Pacific Power reduced its greenhouse emissions by 12 percent compared to the previous five-year average and this trend will accelerate under Energy Vision 2020 as we continue to reduce our reliance on fossil fuel, increase renewable resources and continue to strive for more energy efficiency. (Coal remains 56 percent of Pacific Power's fuel source.)

Pacific Power is making renewable resources happen in multiple ways. Through the North Coast Blue Sky Challenge, our customers are voluntarily choosing to support more renewable energy above and beyond our already aggressive plan. That's amazing. Leadership from communities like ours here on the North Coast are showing the path toward a cleaner energy future.

Alisa Dunlap is the regional business manager for Pacific Power.

LETTERS WELCOME

Letters should be exclusive to The Daily Astorian. We do not publish open letters or third-party letters.

Letters should be fewer than 350 words and must include the writer's name, address and phone numbers. You will be contacted to confirm authorship.

All letters are subject to editing for space, grammar and, on occasion, factual accuracy and verbal verification of authorship. Only two letters per writer are printed each month.

Letters written in response to

other letter writers should address the issue at hand and, rather than mentioning the writer by name, should refer to the headline and date the letter was published. Discourse should be civil and people should be referred to in a respectful manner. Letters referring to news stories should also mention the headline and date of publication.

The Daily Astorian welcomes short "in gratitude" notes from readers for publication. They should keep to a 200-word maximum and writers are asked to avoid simply listing event sponsors. They

must be signed, include the writer's address, phone number and are subject to condensation and editing for style, grammar, etc.

Submissions may be sent in any of these ways:

E-mail to editor@dailyastorian.com;

Online form at www.dailyastorian.com;

Delivered to the Astorian offices at 949 Exchange St. and 1555 N. Roosevelt in Seaside.

Or by mail to Letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR 97103