

States of Washington, California, New York, unite to back climate pact



AP Photo/Andrew Harnik

President Donald Trump arrives in the Rose Garden of the White House Thursday to speak about the U.S. role in the Paris climate change accord.

Oregon governor also critical of President Trump

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE
Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Three Democratic governors said Thursday they won't let the United States back away from a commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, despite President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from an international pact.

"This is an insane move by this president," California Gov. Jerry Brown said, blasting the decision as "deviant behavior from the highest office in the land."

Brown joined Gov. Jay Inslee of Washington state and Gov. Andrew Cuomo of New York to form the U.S. Climate Alliance to uphold the Paris climate agreement, a pact involving nearly 200 nations aimed at slowing the warming of the planet.

The three states already belong to an emissions reduction pact of states and cities worldwide, but Thursday's action marked a direct stand against the Trump administration and a formal commitment to upholding the targets of the Paris agreement.

Connecticut Gov. Dan Malloy and Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe also expressed interest in joining the new pact.

"We governors are going to step into this cockpit and fly the plane," Inslee told reporters. "The president wants to ground it — we're going to fly it."

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown also affirmed the state's commitment to combat climate change. "It is irresponsible for the president to deny these real-world implications," the governor said in a statement. "But I will continue to work with leaders on the West Coast, across the country, and around

the world to address the challenge of climate change. While Oregon is a small state, we can play a huge role in finding innovative solutions to preserve our natural resources, reduce carbon, and create a cleaner, and greener energy mix of the future."

Trump formally announced his decision to leave the historic international agreement after months of teasing the action. He criticized the pact as a job-killer that put the United States as an unfair advantage.

It may be years, however, before the country can formally exit the deal, but Trump said he'll immediately halt implementation. He said he would consider re-entry if the U.S. could get a better deal.

Republican politicians and representatives of the coal industry cheered Trump's action.

"President Trump's courageous decision to exit the Paris accord recognizes that the United States is not legally bound to an Obama-era agreement that set unrealistic emissions targets at the expense of billions of American taxpayer dollars without the approval of Congress," said Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, who joined nine other states in urging Trump to leave the agreement.

Under the Paris agreement, negotiated during former President Barack Obama's tenure, the United States voluntarily committed to reducing polluting emissions by 1.6 billion tons by 2025.

The Democratic governors' new pact commits to that same goal, which requires a 26 to 28 percent reduction in emissions from 2005 levels.

Specific targets haven't been set for each state. California, New York and Washington state together account for about 10 percent of the country's greenhouse gas emissions, Brown's office said.

California is already working to reduce greenhouse

gas emissions by 40 percent from 1990 levels by 2030, and Brown has cast himself as Trump's chief foil on climate policy. It's unclear when discussions between the three governors began, but they announced their new pact within an hour of Trump's announcement.

Brown is about to begin a trip to China to discuss emissions-reduction policies with other leaders and has promised to fill the void left by the Trump administration. At home, Brown is battling to reauthorize a cap-and-trade program that expires in 2020, a key piece of his political legacy. He's said California's economy is proof that combating climate change isn't the economic deadweight Trump suggests.

Washington state is also moving ahead with capping carbon emissions and requiring power plants and oil refineries to reduce emissions over time. In New York, Cuomo announced he would use executive orders to ensure his state continues to abide by the Paris agreement.

West Virginia Coal Association Senior Vice President Chris Hamilton said U.S. withdrawal from the Paris accord would build confidence in U.S. mining and industry even if it wouldn't make major changes on the ground. Trump promised during his campaign to bring back coal mining jobs.

"I think it slows down this rush toward punitive measures against the United States industrial base and mining industry," Hamilton said.

Associated Press writers David Klepper in Albany, New York, Rachel La Corte in Olympia, Washington, and Michael Virtanen in Morgantown, West Virginia, contributed.

Lawmaker ousted to prevent 'no' vote on education plan

Democrat could have blocked budget

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

SALEM — An east Portland Democrat who threatened to oppose the state's education budget because it would force cuts at public schools was ousted from his seat on the Ways and Means education subcommittee during a vote on the spending plan.

State Rep. Diego Hernandez's "no" vote would have meant defeat for the \$8.2 billion biennial budget for K-12 education. When Hernandez made it clear early Thursday that he would vote against the education budget, other members of the subcommittee summoned Ways and Means Co-Chairwoman Nancy Nathanson to the room.

Nathanson used her authority to replace any House member on a Ways and Means subcommittee and temporarily removed Her-

nandez from the subcommittee. She then cast a "yes" vote on the budget, allowing the budget to progress to the full Joint Committee on Ways and Means.

Hernandez's decision was at odds with other Democrats on the subcommittee.

"We have reached a critical point in this session, and I am sorry but ... I cannot vote for a budget that continues to cut our school funding and continues to maintain our mediocrity," said Hernandez, who also is a member of the Reynolds School Board.

He called on legislators to wait on the budget and to focus on passing corporate revenue reform before the end of session in July. A proposed commercial activity tax, for instance, could bring in additional revenue to put toward schools.

While the amount of the K-12 budget for 2017-19 is greater than what was allocated in the previous two years, the Oregon School Boards Association has said the amount will require layoffs, shorter school years and elimination of programs.

Schools have increases in unavoidable costs such as employee health care, contracted pay raises and pensions and other cost hikes such as utilities, according to the association. Hernandez said he wants to see schools receive at least \$8.4 billion to maintain existing service levels.

Some other subcommittee members who voted "yes" agreed that the education budget was too low but said a greater allocation could be added later, if lawmakers are successful in raising more revenue in the next several weeks.

Rep. Julie Parrish, R-West Lynn, who voted "no" on the budget, said the Legislature has consistently increased education funding for schools with few results, because much of the money goes toward pension and health care costs, rather than the classroom.

"Putting more money into education has not yielded better outcomes," Parrish said.

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

Family of suspect in Portland stabbings offers condolences

Associated Press

PORTLAND — Relatives of a man accused of stabbing two men to death who tried to defend two women from an anti-Muslim rant have offered their condolences to the victims' families.

In a letter, Jeremy Christian's family expressed sym-

pathy to the slain men's loved ones; to the young women who were harassed on a light-rail train; and to those who tried to protect them.

The family said in a statement Thursday that they abhor violence, racism and bigotry and can't begin to understand the senseless act.

Prosecutors say Christian focused his racist tirade May 26 on two teenage girls, one of whom was wearing a hijab.

After the girls moved away from Christian, he got into a confrontation with other passengers. Prosecutors say he fatally stabbed two men and wounded a third.

Ban on suction dredging passes state House

Associated Press

SALEM — Suction dredge mining could be permanently banned from western Oregon's wild salmon habitat under a bill that has passed the state House.

The bill creating stream protection passed Wednesday and is awaiting Gov. Kate Brown's pledged signature, The Mail Tribune reported.

Suction dredging uses floating vacuums to suck gravel from a stream bottoms. Material vacuumed by the dredges then go through sluices so miners can strain out gold and other heavy metals. Sand, silt and other fine material are discharged into the water.

Wild-salmon advocates

say the process damages spawning grounds and rearing habitat. Miners have argued current laws already protect salmon habitat and that no peer-reviewed study on suction dredging proves it ruins salmon habitats exists.

The bill would make permanent 2016's temporary ban on suction dredging within creeks and rivers deemed "essen-

tial salmon habitat." The bill also bans dredging in habitat of Pacific lamprey, which are also present in the Rogue Basin.

In 2013, the Legislature passed a bill detailing new dredging restrictions, capping the number of dredging permits offered annually and limiting some of the times, locations and manner for how dredgers operate.

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