

Climate: Rep. Bonamici has warmed to the group's ideas

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heartbeat of their constituency, and that's our role at CCL — to change the heartbeat in a way that favors climate action."

Climate caucus

The bipartisan House Climate Solutions Caucus formed in 2016. With 70 members — an equal number of Republicans and Democrats — it's already larger than the Tea Party Caucus.

The group's lobbying efforts played a critical role in the formation of the climate caucus, Staton said. Locally, the group helped convince U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici to join the caucus.

"I appreciate the efforts of groups like Citizens' Climate Lobby to elevate the voices of everyday Oregonians," the Oregon Democrat said in a statement. "Citizens' Climate Lobby members have been compelling advocates in meetings in my Oregon office and in Washington, D.C., where we need to do all we can to convince some of my colleagues that the time to act is now."

The group has met with Bonamici on several occasions in the past few years, and the congresswoman has warmed to their ideas as time has progressed, Staton said.

"Watching her come from being silent and, sort of, on the fence about climate change and climate action to being a huge advocate for it, for me represents what's really possible and what we're aiming for in our relationships with our members of Congress," Staton said.

With the climate caucus established, the national group has shifted its efforts toward legislation. A draft of a bill — which has yet to draw a Republican sponsor or co-sponsor — would place a fee on fossil fuels at sources such as mines and ports. The tax revenue would be returned to households as dividends.

Staton said the market-based solution is the most effective way to incentivize companies to invest in renewable energy.

"Basically, we know how to solve this. If we want less of the dirty stuff, we need to make it more expensive," Staton said. "Right now we are subsidizing renewable energy, but it's still not enough to make it as competitive as they need to be."

The organization commissioned a study in 2014 from Regional Economic Models that detailed the poten-



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian
A small home sits on the John Day River east of Astoria.

tial impacts of such a bill. It found that within 20 years, the law would net a family of four nearly \$400 per month, cut emissions by 50 percent, create nearly 3 million new jobs, expand gross domestic product by nearly \$1.4 trillion and save 227,000 lives.

Accounting for factors such as increased prices of goods, the study found that 56 percent of Americans would have more money in their pockets, while the wealthiest percentage of people will lose less than 1 percent of their income per year.

Still, the group must convince business owners and politicians that the lofty numbers are accurate and the legislation is worth their support. It hopes to have business owners sign petitions and government bodies draft resolutions, building political momentum that they can point to when meeting members of Congress.

When those conversations take place, relationships such as the one the group holds with Bonamici will be key, Staton said.

"We build relationships with these members of Congress in ways where they invite us back and use us as their resource," Staton said.

Passion

But how will the plan resonate in Clatsop County?

In the six years since she co-founded the Portland chapter, Staton has given at least 35 presentations similar to the one in February. She only recalled one other meeting — with a progressive club soon after she started in the position — that attracted as much passion.

"The meeting was a little more contentious on both sides than I would have liked," said Justin Saydell, the Astoria chapter's volunteer group leader. "But that's what you get for doing a presentation

like this in Astoria."

Sea levels could rise in the area by as much as 9 feet by the end of the century, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The rises could change geographical dynamics on John Day Road — a common area for floods — large parts of Warrenton and Hammond and land along the Lewis and Clark and Youngs rivers.

Increased ocean acidification would adversely impact sea life and, in turn, fishing.

"The Astoria chapter is especially important because it's on the coast and so close to the shellfish industries," Staton said.

The chapter will also represent the second of its kind in the 1st Congressional District.

"It'll be really valuable to Bonamici to have constituents writing to her, businesses writing to her," Staton said. "It'll be really helpful for her to know she's got backing, that she's not in this alone."

The organization's launch event will take place March 24 from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Astoria Library. It hopes to utilize the meeting to attract members.

Saydell has reached out to the Port of Astoria Commission, Astoria City Council, Warrenton City Commission and Clatsop County Board of Commissioners, he said. He hopes to set up meetings with those officials in the future.

Astoria City Councilor Tom Brownson, who attended the February presentation, said he has not met with the organization yet but supports its national strategy. Less clear, though, is how much momentum it can build in Astoria and other places in the county.

"We're sort of a mixed bag here in Astoria," Brownson said. "I'd like it to be effective. I couldn't tell you what the read is locally."

Marquis: 'The county does not spend any of its own money on mental health'

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with space to expand in the future. Commissioners may decide on March 14 whether to refer the proposal to voters.

Marquis pointed to the fact that more than 40 percent of those convicted of driving under the influence of alcohol — one of the more common crimes his office prosecutes — live outside Clatsop County.

"It's mostly, frankly, tourists," Marquis said.

The district attorney also addressed a recent idea from Richard Elfering — a local mental health advocate — to convert the former youth facility into a treatment center. Marquis said the costs would likely be double that of building a jail and operating costs would be as much as six times more.

"You know, not a bad idea," Marquis said of Elfering. "However, there is no such facility anywhere in Oregon."

About 75 percent of the people the district attorney's office prosecutes likely have a substance-abuse issue, Marquis said. Nearly 70 percent of those in jail at a given time are awaiting trial. Several

arrestees are released each week due to overcrowding.

"The fact of the matter is that there are a certain number of people who commit crimes that are of such danger to the community that if you do not detain them — and sometimes they are at rock bottom — they will either kill themselves, kill somebody else or destroy somebody else's lives," Marquis said. "A jail is a place where people who have demonstrated their inability or unwillingness to follow even the most basic rules are kept until you can have a trial."

Clatsop County and local hospitals should use more resources to aid those with mental health and substance-abuse issues, Marquis said. He proposed that the county spend \$350,000 for mental health professionals and that hospitals pick up more of the slack for such treatment.

"The county does not spend any of its own money on mental health," Marquis said. "The county's got to put some skin in the game."

Discussions about prison and jail populations throughout the country have become more prominent in recent

years. But about 75 percent of those convicted of a felony in Oregon are never transferred from a jail to a prison because they are not incarcerated long enough, Marquis said.

"We are not Texas, we are not Louisiana and we are not Florida," Marquis said.

In a question-and-answer session following the talk, George McCartin — a county commission candidate in the May primary — asked why the county stopped discussing the \$12 million option. Two previous bond measures have failed largely due to the cost.

Marquis said the cost of reconstructing the pod-like structure of the former youth facility would be less than the price tag to upgrade the current, vertically shaped jail downtown.

"It's very different from a jail but it still has the same bones," Marquis said.

The district attorney compared the need for a jail to the necessity of an emergency room at a hospital.

"You don't want to use it. You don't want to go there," Marquis said. "But you want it to be up and running when you do go there."

Worker: Sweet Relief leased the building and subleased a space to Oei and West

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oil with the open-air system in contradiction of state law, felonious behavior barring his claims.

The "evidence of record in this case is that plaintiff didn't actually make hash oil at any time," Jonah Flynn, Magley's lawyer, wrote.

Magley was a construction worker who played a minor role without any profit in the operations at

the site, unlike the defendants, Flynn wrote. Clatsop County District Attorney Josh Marquis, who prosecuted West and Oei for felony assault and reckless endangerment, has said he does not believe Magley committed a crime.

Sweet Relief leased the building and subleased a space to Oei and West for growing marijuana and manufacturing hash oil. Flynn claimed Sweet Relief was

responsible for preventing the release of hazardous materials such as the odorless butane gas that caused the explosion, while Delphia as the property owner was responsible for installing proper ventilation, sprinklers and other safety equipment.

"It was the negligence of Delphia, Harper, Sweet Relief, and (Rich & Rhine and United Brands) herein which directly led to this explosion," Flynn wrote.

Election: Primary is coming May 15

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Tim Josi — a Tillamook County commissioner — John Orr — an Astoria attorney — and Tiffany Mitchell — a progressive activist with Indivisible North Coast Oregon — have filed for the Democratic primary. Warrenton author and educator Melissa Ousley filed as a Democrat but withdrew her candidacy late

last month.

Gene Stout — a general contractor from Banks — and Vineeta S. Lower — a Seaside teacher — will compete in the Republican primary, while Brian Halvorsen — a Rockaway Beach community organizer who founded North Coast Progressives — filed as an Independent.

Josi has received the strongest financial backing of all the

District 32 candidates.

Ron Brown filed earlier this year as a district attorney candidate. Brown is a longtime deputy for Josh Marquis, who has held the position since 1994 but will not seek another term.

Circuit Court Judge Cindee Matyas also filed for re-election.

The primary election is May 15, and the general election will take place Nov. 6.

Easter

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