

#TimberUnity gears up to fight cap and trade

Movement hopes to expand scope

By **SIERRA DAWN McCLAIN**
Capital Press

SALEM — The state Legislature’s short session begins Feb. 3, with lawmakers planning to resurrect climate legislation after last session’s controversial cap-and-trade proposal failed.

And #TimberUnity, the group heading protests last year, will be back.

On Feb. 6, #TimberUnity will organize a convoy of logging trucks to Salem and a rally on the Capitol steps.

On the group’s Facebook event page, as of early this week, 936 people have said they will go to the protest, more than 3,100 have marked themselves as interested and 97 have pledged to drive semi-trucks.

“We want to stop cap and trade,” said Adam Lardy, a #TimberUnity spokesman. “Politicians may want to run with a watered-down version this year. But once they get a foothold, why wouldn’t they run with it? So we can’t let them get a foothold.”

Last year, #TimberUnity formed to protest House Bill 2020, the cap-and-trade bill, which passed the state House. The legislation was designed to cut carbon emissions, but it roused opposition from farmers, loggers and others who argued the



Sierra Dawn McClain/Capital Press

#TimberUnity organized massive protests at the Oregon Capitol in Salem last year against climate legislation.

bill would raise fuel and natural gas prices.

The protests culminated with the walkout of Senate Republicans, inflaming party tensions. The bill stalled in the Senate at the end of the session when it failed to gain adequate support. According to Harry Esteve, communications manager for the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, it’s too early to know the specifics of a renewed cap-and-trade proposal.

Kate Kondayen, deputy communications director for Gov. Kate Brown, said the governor is focused on an economywide strategy with

enforceable carbon limits. Kondayen said Brown plans to “ensure the bill protects jobs and livelihoods in rural communities” while still achieving state emissions goals.

“Doing nothing is not an option,” Kondayen said.

Although #TimberUnity formed to protest HB 2020, the movement has ballooned into something bigger.

“The movement is shifting,” Lardy said. “We’re fighting overregulation. We’re fighting laws that kill jobs and communities. It’s not just about cap and trade anymore.”

The movement bears resemblance to the “yellow

vests” in France, a grassroots citizens’ campaign that started as a fuel tax protest and has morphed into a nationwide anti-government movement aimed at economic justice for the working class.

#TimberUnity also echoed a global trend. In what experts have dubbed the Global Protest Wave of 2019, demonstrations erupted in the Arab world, France, Catalonia, Hong Kong, Latin America and beyond. According to the United Nations, demonstrators around the world sought autonomy, freedom from political corruption and economic fairness.

As #TimberUnity’s ranks swell in 2020, its leaders say they are determined to keep protests peaceful.

“I’m an Army wife. I stood up for Gov. Brown when she walked into our caucus room,” said Julie Parrish, a former Republican state legislator who serves as a board member for #TimberUnity. “It’s about respect. If any policymaker will speak with us, we’ll take the meeting.”

The movement’s success, said Parrish, also depends on how protesters treat one another. Parrish said the #TimberUnity movement is far from homogenous.

“We’re a voting bloc of

over 50,000 people now, and we’re not all politically the same,” said Parrish. “I don’t own a gun or hunt or fish. Some people are pro-choice, some pro-life. Some are hell-bent on electing (Donald) Trump, and others would never vote for him.”

She laughed. “It makes managing the dialogue interesting sometimes. But we’re trying to focus on common ground — economic issues.”

#TimberUnity’s financial muscle comes from its donors, both through direct giving and in-kind donations.

The group filed as a 501(c)(6) membership-based nonprofit, and also runs the Timber Unity Political Action Committee, or TUPAC. Since its genesis in June, TUPAC has brought in over \$177,000.

TUPAC has been criticized for its partisan and special-interest donors, such as Andrew Miller, a prominent timber executive.

#TimberUnity’s leaders, however, say they’re undaunted by criticisms. Parrish said the organization will extend its reach by helping plant local chapters across Oregon, California and Washington state.

#TimberUnity, said Parrish, also plans to host training sessions and teach civic engagement workshops.

“You can only tax people so much,” Lardy said. “It all started with a rally, and we’re doing it again.”

Secretary of state sued again over ballot decisions

Clean energy groups challenge rejections

By **SAM STITES**
Oregon Capital Bureau

Proponents of two clean energy initiatives on Wednesday sued Oregon Secretary of State Bev Clarno to reverse her decision stopping the groups from advancing initiatives for the November election.

Renew Oregon, the coalition of clean energy advocacy groups pushing the initiatives, said Clarno’s rejection of two of their three proposed ballot measures was not based on precedent. It sued in Marion County Circuit Court.

The group noted in a statement that Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum and the state legislative counsel last year questioned Clarno’s actions. Both disagreed with the positions Clarno and Deputy Secretary of State Rich Vial have taken in rejecting petitions for the fall election.

Eric Richardson, chief petitioner and executive director of the Eugene chapter of the NAACP,

called the rejection of the two proposals an egregious abuse of power and said Clarno’s actions were unconstitutional.

“We are joining the many voices speaking out against the way the secretary of state is blocking access of citizens to the ballot,” he said.

Renew Oregon was seeking to put two measures before voters that would require all retail electricity in Oregon to be from carbon free sources by 2045 and mandate the state invest in carbon reduction measures. The proposals were seen as a backstop if legislators don’t address carbon reductions in the session convening in February.

The two initiatives included new standards for energy-related projects that required workers to get pre-

vailing — or union level — wages and other benefits.

Clarno, a former Republican lawmaker selected in early 2019 to finish out the term of the late Dennis Richardson, concluded the two measures violated state law that mandates an initiative can deal in only one subject.

The two initiatives met the threshold for sponsorship signatures and received draft ballot titles in November before Clarno rejected them last month.

The third initiative in the package — a proposal to have Oregon’s greenhouse gas emissions 100% below 1990 levels by 2050 — is still in play and awaits an opinion from the Oregon Supreme Court before moving forward to the signature-gathering process.

This is the second lawsuit filed against Clarno in

the past year over the rejection of initiative petitions. Interests pushing for stricter water standards around timber harvests also claimed Clarno acted outside the law in a case that she won in Marion County Circuit Court, but is pending an

appeal.

“Secretary Clarno and Deputy Secretary Vial are wasting taxpayer money to protect the interests of the wealthy and powerful against the will of the people,” said Teresa Hurst, executive director of Renew

Oregon. “Everyone in Oregon should be concerned about this threat to our democracy.”

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Bev Clarno

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