Trump signals aid for farmers

By KEVIN FREKING
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump signaled Friday that he's prepared to tap federal coffers again to help farmers suffering from the tariff fights that he initiated.

The Trump administration over the past two years has committed to providing farmers with $27 billion in assistance. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue has said that a third year of financial assistance would not be necessary since China had committed to increasing its agriculture purchases under a trade deal.

But China's economy is being rocked by the new virus that has infected more than 75,000 people and forced many businesses and factories to temporarily close. Administration officials have floated the possibility in recent weeks that the new coronavirus may delay some of the anticipated purchases by China. Meanwhile, data from the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts shows an uptick in farm bankruptcies last year, 595, versus 498 the year before.

Typing in all capital letters, Trump tweeted that if "our formally targeted farmers need additional aid until such times as the trade deals with China, Mexico, Canada and others fully kick in, that aid will be provided by the federal government, paid for out of the massive tariff money coming into the USA!"

That's not how tariffs work, though. Tariffs are paid by American companies, which usually pass the cost on to consumers through higher prices.

Rep. Ted Lieu, D-Calif., replied to Trump's tweet, saying, "I see that you are, again, embracing socialism. Also, you don't seem to understand math. Your tariffs are paid by US citizens, not China. That's subtraction, not addition."

Trump's comments come after the Washington Post reported that the Department of Agriculture's chief economist, Robert Johansson, projected that agricultural exports to China would reach roughly $14 billion in the fiscal year that ends Sept. 30, only a $4 billion increase from one year ago. The Wall Street Journal also reported Perdue's comments that his department isn't planning for another round of financial aid unless there is an unexpected disruption in global trade.

The low projection from the Agriculture Department economist contrasted with the administration's description of the Phase 1 trade deal. Under the deal, China is supposed to buy $40 billion in U.S. agricultural products a year — a wildly ambitious goal considering that it's never bought more than $26 billion a year and that during the trade war it has redirected some of its farm purchases to other exporting countries.

Trump has raised expectations for farmers going into the election year, telling them at his campaign rallies that they will need to buy bigger tractors to meet the coming demand for their corn, soybeans, beef and pork. Farmers could play a key role in the coming presidential elections in states such as Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Michigan.

Alex Brandon/AP Photo

Roger Stone, center, puts his hat on as he departs after his sentencing at federal court in Washington, D.C., on Thursday.

Trump ally Stone sentenced to prison

By ASHRAF KHALIL, MARK SHERMAN and MICHAEL BALSAMO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Roger Stone, a longtime confidant of President Donald Trump, was sentenced to more than three years in prison Thursday for obstructing a congressional investigation in a case that has sparked fears about presidential interference in the justice system.

Soon after Judge Amy Berman Jackson pronounced sentence, Trump publicly decried Stone's conviction as unfair and prominent Republican legislators were giving tacit support for a pardon. But Trump said he wasn't ready to act just yet.

"I want the process to play out. I think that's the best thing to do because I would love to see Roger exonerated," he said. "I'm going to watch the process. I'm going to watch very closely. … At some point I'll make a determination."

The case was marked by the Justice Department's extraordinary about-face on a sentencing recommendation and a very public dispute between Trump and Attorney General William Barr, who said the president was undermining the department's historical independence and making "it impossible for me to do my job."

The president responded by asserting that he was the "chief law enforcement officer of the federal government."

Stone was convicted in November on all seven counts of an indictment that accused him of lying to Congress, tampering with a witness and obstructing the House investigation into whether the Trump campaign coordinated with Russia to tip the 2016 election.

He was the sixth Trump aide or adviser to be convicted on charges brought as part of special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into possible Russian interference in the 2016 election.

At sentencing Thursday, Jackson grilled federal prosecutor John Crabb on the department's decision to replace a tough sentencing recommendation for Stone with a more lenient one, which had prompted the original prosecution team to quit the case. Trump had called the original recommendation of seven to nine years a "miscarriage of justice."

Jackson pointedly told Crabb that he might know less about the case than anyone in the room.

Jackson said the evidence clearly showed that Stone testified falsely to Congress and repeatedly pressured a potential witness to either back up his lie or refuse to testify.

Near the end, Jackson's voice rose in anger as she said that Stone's entire defense strategy seemed to amount to "So what?" Stone did not testify and called no witnesses on his behalf.

SPORTS

Knappa boys one step closer to the No. 1 seed

The Astorian

If there was a league playoff game that really didn't need to be played Thursday night, it was the Northwest League boys basketball game at Knappa, where the Loggers were hosting a winner-to-state game against Gaston.

It was the same Gaston team that Knappa defeated twice in the regular season by scores of 72-40 and 59-29.

The Loggers scored the trifecta Thursday night, with their third 30-point win of the season over the Greyhounds, 61-31.

Columbia Christian was the official Northwest League champion with a 15-1 league record, but "league champion" doesn't mean much in the Northwest League.

All of a sudden, the Loggers are the huge favorites to wrap up the league's No. 1 seed to the state playoffs, after Mannahouse Christian upset Columbia Christian, 53-51, in a Thursday league playoff.

Mannahouse — which finished fourth in the league standings at 8-8 — lost twice to Knappa in the regular season, 50-34 and 62-33.

Mannahouse and Knappa will play for the No. 1 seed Saturday at 7 p.m. in Vernonia.

Nestucca Royals top Knappa girls

The Astorian

One night after a 55-49 win at Nestucca, the Knappa girls suffered a setback Thursday, as Portland Christian defeated the Lady Loggers 54-26 in a Northwest League playoff game in Portland.

The Lady Loggers can still clinch a spot in the state playoffs, with a win over Faith Bible Saturday at 2 p.m. at Vernonia.

In Wednesday's league playoff victory at Nestucca, Knappa outscored the Bobcats 8-2 over the final two minutes, in a game that featured 53 fouls.

It was the first playoff win in two years for Knappa.

Logger coach Tracie Brockey said, "With the game tied 47-47 and 2:03 left on the clock, we called our last timeout to refocus."

Knappa freshman Katelynn Weaver scored after the timeout, "and then it became a battle of composure and free throws," Brockey said. "Megan (Hellberg) hit an open baseline jumper to put us up four."

Nestucca's Kiara Webber (who finished with 14 points) finished a drive at the rim, but Knappa's Hannah Dietrichs and Weaver hit free throws to close out the win.

Knappa's Vicki Ramvick picked up her fifth foul midway through the fourth quarter, followed by Sophia Carlson and Madelynn Weaver.

"With three of our starters fouled out of the game — two seniors who very well could've been walking off the court for the last time — we challenged our girls to rise up and have each other's backs," Brockey said. "They owned the moment. Each girl contributed in some way."

She added, "without Vicki's rebounding presence, Hannah, Megan and Raven (Corcoran) took over. Madelynn and Sophia are offensive threats for us, but we found scoring elsewhere."

Katelynn Weaver led the Loggers with 18 points, eight rebounds, four steals and three assists.

She also made some crucial defensive plays that led to Nestucca turnovers down the stretch.

Madelynn Weaver added 11 points and Carlson scored 10, while Bayle McCall was tasked with guarding Nestucca's Olivia Leslie in the final minutes, and did not allow Leslie to score.

Willamina eliminates Warrenton girls, 49-24

The Astorian

The third time was not the charm for the Warrenton girls basketball team Thursday night.

Two days after playing their best game of the season, the Lady Warriors came up short in a Coastal Range League playoff at Willamina, where the Bulldogs defeated Warrenton for the third time this season, 49-24.

The Warriors held a 9-8 lead after one quarter, but a 7-0 run by the Bulldogs late in the second quarter gave Willamina a 22-15 halftime lead, and the 'Dogs never looked back, building an eventual 35-15 lead late in the third period.

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SEVEN-DAY FORECAST FOR ASTORIA

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TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
50 40	50 39	49 36	52 37	52 40	59 38	58 40
Rain and drizzle	Rain; winds subsiding	A morning shower	More clouds than sun	Partly sunny	Showers possible	Showers possible

ALMANAC

Astoria through Thursday

Temperatures

High/low	57/33
Normal high/low	52/37
Record high	65 in 1916
Record low	25 in 2011

Precipitation

Thursday	0.00"
Month to date	5.96"
Normal month to date	5.19"
Year to date	24.10"
Normal year to date	15.39"

Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2020

UNDER THE SKY

Tonight's Sky: Just above the W-shaped constellation Cassiopeia, toward neighboring Perseus, look for the Double Cluster.

Source: Jim Todd, OMSI

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	7:08 a.m.
Sunset tonight	5:51 p.m.
Moonrise today	7:08 a.m.
Moonset today	4:59 p.m.

New	First	Full	Last
Feb 23	Mar 2	Mar 9	Mar 16

TODAY'S TIDES

Time	High (ft.)	Time	Low (ft.)
Astoria / Port Docks			
12:52 a.m.	7.6	6:31 a.m.	2.7
12:14 p.m.	8.4	7:14 p.m.	-0.2
Cape Disappointment			
12:41 a.m.	7.3	5:48 a.m.	3.1
11:55 a.m.	8.5	6:28 p.m.	-0.1
Hammond			
12:48 a.m.	7.6	6:07 a.m.	2.8
12:05 p.m.	8.7	6:42 p.m.	-0.3
Warrenton			
12:47 a.m.	8.0	6:15 a.m.	2.8
12:09 p.m.	8.8	6:58 p.m.	-0.1
Knappa			
1:29 a.m.	7.9	7:32 a.m.	2.3
12:51 p.m.	8.6	8:15 p.m.	-0.2
Depoe Bay			
11:09 a.m.	8.8	5:17 a.m.	3.3
none		5:56 p.m.	-0.2

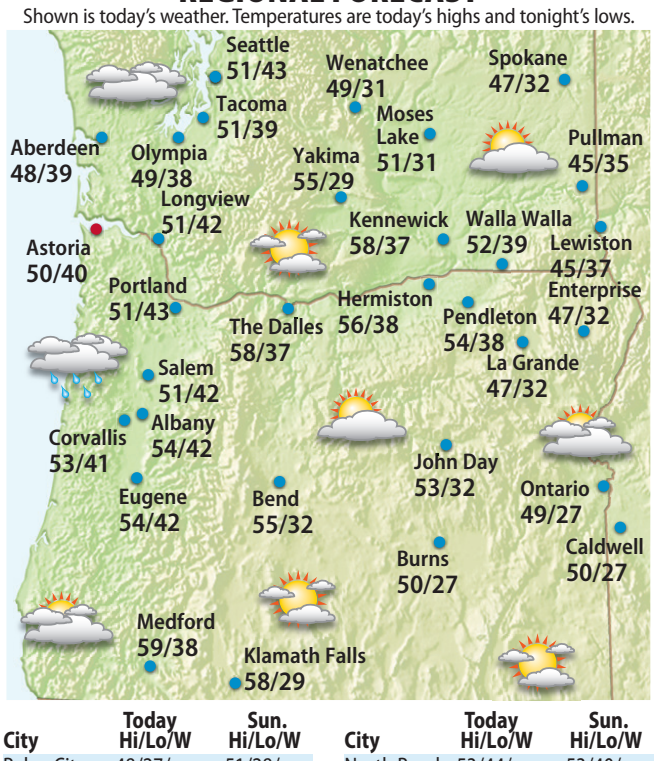
NATIONAL CITIES

City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Sun. Hi/Lo/W
Atlanta	56/34/s	58/46/c
Boston	49/31/s	51/34/s
Chicago	47/31/s	51/37/pc
Dallas	55/45/pc	61/49/t
Denver	51/27/pc	37/24/sn
Honolulu	82/67/pc	82/67/pc
Houston	62/45/pc	67/61/c
Los Angeles	62/52/sh	67/49/s
Miami	75/63/pc	76/65/pc
New York City	49/35/s	54/38/s
Phoenix	66/48/r	66/49/s
San Francisco	60/50/pc	62/47/pc
Wash., DC	56/32/s	57/36/s

Weather (W): **s**-sunny, **pc**-partly cloudy, **c**-cloudy, **sh**-showers, **t**-thunderstorms, **r**-rain, **sf**-snow flurries, **sn**-snow, **i**-ice.

REGIONAL FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Sun. Hi/Lo/W	City	Today Hi/Lo/W	Sun. Hi/Lo/W
Baker City	48/27/pc	51/28/c	North Bend	53/44/r	53/40/r
Brookings	56/42/pc	51/42/r	Roseburg	55/41/s	55/39/r
Ilwaco	48/42/r	49/41/r	Seaside	49/41/r	49/39/r
Newberg	51/41/r	51/35/r	Springfield	54/42/r	51/38/r
Newport	49/42/r	50/39/r	Vancouver	49/42/r	51/37/r