

The bill would add nearly 4,700 miles of rivers and streams in Oregon to the Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

## Dozens of Oregon groups sign letter supporting River Democracy Act

Advocacy sent to Wyden, Merkley

By MICHAEL KOHN  
The Bulletin

A plan to protect thousands of miles of rivers and streams in Oregon received renewed attention last week when dozens of organizations banded together to encourage politicians to speed up the passage of the bill.

Seventy-five organizations across the state sent a joint letter to U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden and U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley urging them to pass the River Democracy Act. The letter was signed mainly by conservation groups and outdoor sporting and fishing organizations.

If passed, the bill would add nearly 4,700 miles of rivers and streams in Oregon to the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The federal designation, created in 1968, protects rivers and develops them for tourism, just as national parks and national forests protect designated areas of land. Rivers can be listed as having wild, scenic or recreational value.

Wyden and Merkley — Oregon Democrats — introduced the River Democracy Act in February 2021. More than 15,000 streams and rivers were nominated by Oregonians for inclusion in the act after Wyden called on state residents to suggest their favorite waterways in 2019. In Bend, one nomination came from a group of sixth graders at Pacific Crest Middle School.

But the bill has its detractors, too. In January, U.S. Rep. Cliff Bentz, an Oregon Republican, spoke out against the legislation on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives, declaring that it will create a wild-

fire risk in Oregon's watersheds. Bentz argued that the bill would put forests at risk because it would allow prescribed burns without conducting thinning operations.

The American Forest Resource Council, which represents logging interests, is among the groups that defend Bentz's position.

"We continue to oppose the River Democracy Act because it will increase the risk of severe wildfires, threaten our communities, impede public access and impact multiple uses of public lands," said Nick Smith, the council's public affairs director. "Catastrophic wildfires including subsequent erosion and sedimentation pose the greatest threat to watersheds and rivers, and water quantity and quality."

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Smith said more management of federal lands will help reduce wildfire.

"Rather than imposing more arbitrary designations and restrictions on federal lands, Oregon's federal representatives should focus on giving public lands managers more resources and tools to proactively reduce wildfire risks, maintain access and protect our forests, rivers and communities," he said.

Wyden's office has

pushed back against the argument that forests will be at a greater risk for fire, stating that the bill would require agencies to implement a fire risk-reduction plan across a half-mile corridor on either side of a river or stream.

The letter sent last week was supported by riverkeeper groups, guiding associations, watershed councils and paddling clubs, among others.

"Although our groups represent a wide variety of interests, purposes and people across the state, we all have at least one thing in common — a love of Oregon's rivers," stated a portion of the letter. "They provide us with clean drinking water, our favorite swimming holes and places to take our families fishing and boating."

The designations would add protection for fish, wildlife, clean drinking water and recreation in watersheds, including the Deschutes, Metolius, McKenzie, and others.

The next step for the bill is a vote by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, which is chaired by U.S. Sen. Joe Manchin, a West Virginia Democrat.

Wyden told The Bulletin that public lands bills tend to get a close look at the end of the year, and he is preparing to have it voted on in the Senate by that time. His office is in communication with Manchin specifically to seek the necessary votes to get the bill passed.

"In terms of public lands, we're going to fairly soon have some markups, where the legislation is formally considered and pulling out all the stops for it," Wyden said. "We are getting all the small businesses from rural Oregon behind it and we are pleased about the coalition coming together."

## Washington state cap and trade cost estimates set to increase

By DON JENKINS  
Capital Press

A Washington Department of Ecology consultant projects that cap-and-trade auctions next year will be more costly for fuel suppliers and manufacturers than originally expected.

Vivid Economics predicts that allowances will go for at least \$41 each, nearly double the \$22.78 state agencies estimated in 2021.

An allowance will grant the right to emit 1 ton of carbon dioxide. High auction prices will increase business costs while raising more money for state-funded climate change reduction programs.

Allowances could average \$58 or \$68 in 2023 under two other scenarios analyzed by Vivid. The firm did not project cap and trade's impact on gasoline and diesel prices.

The state in 2021 estimated auctions would raise \$441 million in government revenue the first year. The figure has not yet been updated based on Vivid's forecast, Department of Ecology spokesman Andrew Wineke said Tuesday.

NERA Economic Consulting, hired by the Western States Petroleum Association, estimated Ecology's proposed cap-and-trade rules will increase gas prices by 56 cents a gallon and diesel by 64 cents in 2024.

Ecology maintains that its proposal will increase pump prices by less than 1%.

Supply and demand and global events, such as COVID and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, drive fuel prices, Wineke said. "Regulations play a very minor role in the price people pay at the pump," he said.

Whatever the additional cost, fuel suppliers probably will pass them along to motorists, Washington Research Council economist



Don Jenkins/Capital Press

The Washington Department of Ecology is finalizing cap-and-trade rules.

Kriss Sjoblom said Tuesday.

The world market sets fuel prices and suppliers aren't limited to serving Washington, he said. The auctions also will be another reason for pump prices to fluctuate, he said.

"Because there is uncertainty about what allowance prices will be, it probably adds a bit to the volatility of gas prices," Sjoblom said.

The Legislature in 2021 passed cap and trade, the centerpiece of Gov. Jay Inslee's climate agenda. To carry out the law, Ecology has proposed 138 pages of regulations.

Auctions are at the heart of the rules. Beginning next year, large carbon-emitters will bid for allowances. The number of allowances auctioned off will decline each year.

Allowances are expected to become increasingly expensive as the state moves closer to its goal of cutting emissions by 45% by 2030 and 95% by 2050.

State agencies in 2021 projected the cost of alliances based on California's experience, which has been holding cap-and-trade auctions since 2014. For many years, allowances were going for near the minimum price, though they have been rising recently, according to the U.S. Energy

Information Administration.

Vivid warned allowance prices were uncertain. Many factors will influence prices, including how fast drivers convert to electric vehicles, reducing demand from fuel suppliers for allowances.

Merging Washington's cap-and-trade auctions with those jointly held by California and Quebec also would hold down allowance prices, according to Vivid.

Presumably, a bigger pool of allowances will hold down bids. Ecology will start looking at linking up with California and Quebec once it's finalized Washington's cap-and-trade rules.

"Given the benefits linkage could have for our market, Ecology has accelerated our timeline and will begin exploring the benefits of linking in the fall," Wineke said.

Food Northwest, a trade association of food processors, says cap and trade will increase the cost of making food in Washington.

If Ecology doesn't hold down allowance costs, food makers may move to Idaho, the association said in comments sent to Ecology.

J.R. Simplot Co. warned that rapid increases in gas prices will cause a consumer backlash and cause political pressure to revise cap and trade.




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**DAILY FAIR EVENTS 2022**

**TUESDAY AUGUST 2**  
4PM - PIG ROAST • 6PM - STICK HORSE RACE  
7PM - PERRY GERBER: COUNTRY

**WEDNESDAY AUGUST 3**  
NOON, 5PM - PERRY GERBER: COUNTRY  
7:30 - MEMO: MARIACHI BAND

**THURSDAY AUGUST 4**  
11AM, 1:30PM, 4:30PM, 7:30PM - LOUIS FOX: MAGIC SHOW  
NOON, 3PM, 6PM - BRIANA RENE

**FRIDAY AUGUST 5**  
10AM, 1:30PM, 8:30PM - LOUIS FOX: MAGIC SHOW  
11AM, 4PM - BRIANA RENE  
1PM - ARRON CRAWFORD  
7PM - TRACE ADKINS

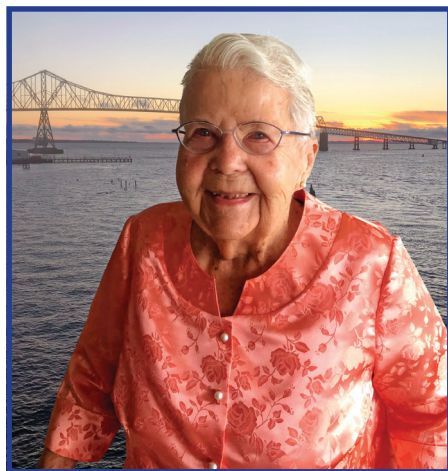
**SATURDAY AUGUST 6**  
11AM - LOUIS FOX: MAGIC SHOW  
11:30AM - FASHION SHOW  
12:30PM, 4PM, 7PM - JOEL GIBSON

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