



Joel Aslin accepts groceries from his neighbor, Karen Colby, from a volunteer with a nonprofit store to door on 07/22/2021. Colby spent 10 days in the hospital with complications from heat stroke. AP photo/Gillian Flaccus.

Extreme Weather Events Linked to Climate Change

Oregon county sues oil, coal companies for \$51 billion over deadly heat dome

(AP) Oregon's most populous county is suing more than a dozen large fossil fuel companies to recover costs related to extreme weather events linked to climate change.

The lawsuit filed Thursday in Multnomah County Circuit Court alleges the combined carbon pollution the companies emitted was a substantial factor in causing and exacerbating a 2021 heat dome that killed 69 people, The Oregonian/OregonLive reported. Multnomah County is home to Portland and known nationally for mild weather and rain. The companies named in the lawsuit include Shell, BP, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, Koch Industries and ExxonMobil, among others. The county seeks over \$51 billion in damages, including \$50 million for costs it says it incurred because of the heat dome.

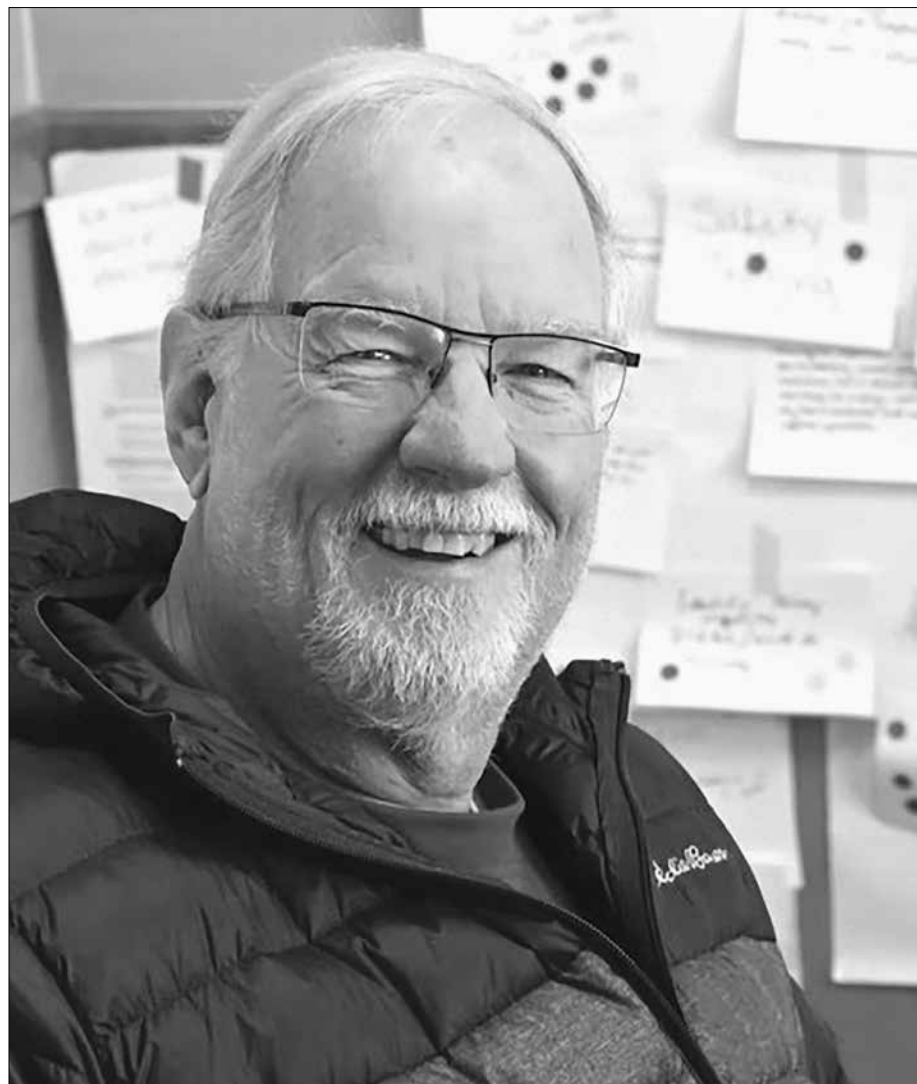
Multnomah County is also asking for \$1.5 billion in damages to pay for costs associated with future extreme heat events and an additional \$50 billion to study, plan, and "weatherproof" against extreme heat. Some of the measures would include expanding health care and emergency services, adding insulation and HVAC systems to buildings, tearing out asphalt and planting more trees, Multnomah County chair Jessica Vega

Pederson said. "At the core, this lawsuit is about fairness and accountability for these giant oil companies who have record profits, who have known about the damage that their products do to our environment and who have been using pseudoscience, disinformation and outright lies for decades," Pederson said.

Most of the companies named in the lawsuit didn't respond to the newspaper's request for comment. Chevron Corp. counsel Theodore J. Boutros, Jr. in a statement contended the lawsuit makes "novel, baseless claims," is unconstitutional and unfairly targets "one industry and group of companies engaged in lawful activity that provides tremendous benefits to society." ExxonMobil told Oregon Public Broadcasting that the lawsuit did "nothing to address climate change." Residents and officials in the Pacific Northwest have become more vigilant about heat wave preparations after some 800 people died in Oregon, Washington and British Columbia during the heat dome weather event caused by a strong ridge of high pressure in late June and early July 2021.

The temperature at the time soared to an all-time high of 116 F (46.7 C) in Portland and smashed heat records in cities and towns across the region with some temperatures more than 30 degrees higher than normal. Many of the hundreds of people who died were older and lived alone. Multnomah County's lawsuit joins communities around the globe that have filed lawsuits against climate polluters that continue to market products that science shows are driving human-caused climate change.

Mayor Resigns Over Posts



Former Mayor Dean Sawyer apologized and resigned from office after offensive posts came to light. Courtesy of Newport News-Times

Mayor of coastal Oregon city resigns over posts in police Facebook group

(AP) — The mayor of a city on the Oregon coast has apologized and resigned over offensive content he posted in a private Facebook group for current and retired police officers.

Oregon Public Broadcasting reported that Newport Mayor Dean Sawyer apologized and resigned Monday morning, three days after the media outlet revealed that since 2016, Sawyer had been sharing memes and posts denigrating women, immigrants, non-English speakers and the LGBTQ+ community in the Facebook group with 39,000 members. His posts in recent weeks specifically targeted transgender community, OPB reported.

A local LGBTQ+ pride group held a demonstration over the weekend at City Hall, with more than 100 people demanding that Sawyer leave office. Five of his six colleagues on the Newport City Council attended the protest and appeared ready to ask for his resignation at a special meeting scheduled for Monday. The police chief in the central coast city of about 10,000 and the Lincoln County sheriff also condemned Sawyer's posts.

"I feel really happy and just proud that we as a city in Newport all came together and spoke our minds, shared our feelings in a positive, amazing way," said Kathy Redwine, who is on the board of Newport Oregon Pride. "It would have been bad if it kept going on with all that hurt and distrust."

Sawyer told OPB on Friday that the Facebook group called LEO Only is a private group and posts are not meant for the public. On Monday, he told The Oregonian/OregonLive that his online persona had become too polarizing for him to continue.

"I now realize that some of my actions and my words have hurt people I love and care about," Sawyer said. "This is something that I take full responsibility for. I am sorry to everyone in this community and anyone hurt by my actions, directly or indirectly."

He said his posts were "vile and dark, and I shouldn't have gotten involved in it," according to The Oregonian/OregonLive.

"It's not freedom of speech, it was stupid speech," Sawyer said.

OPB reported that it had reviewed the memes but didn't say how it got access. The Facebook group requires proof of an active or retired law enforcement ID to join.

Sawyer was a Newport police officer for three decades before he was elected mayor in 2018.