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PRESERVE THE ACA



Several dozen people showed up at Westlake Park May 5 for a rally organized by SEIU to protest the House Republicans repeal and replacement of the Affordable Care Act.

Clean-Air Advocates Holding Their Breath SB 1008 would direct use of Oregon's portion of Volkswagen settlement

By Christen McCurdy
Of The Skanner News

The state of Oregon has tens of millions of dollars to reduce diesel emissions — but the bill that would specify how that money can be spent is floundering in the legislature.

Senate Bill 1008 creates a Clean Diesel Engine Fund separate from the state's general fund, much of it for retrofitting diesel vehicles to ensure cleaner burning.

But an amended version of the bill does away with the timeline requiring certain diesel vehicles to

be retrofitted, rendering it toothless, said Mary Peveto, co-founder of Neighbors for Clean Air.

"Everything was pretty much gutted from the bill except for the glide path for the VW money," Peveto told *The Skanner*.

Last summer the federal government fined Volkswagen more than \$15 billion for cheating on emissions tests, after an investigation revealed the cars it had marketed it as "clean diesel" vehicles were anything but — and a court settlement set aside \$85 million for the state of Oregon, which had the highest per capita owner-

ship of Volkswagen cars in the country.

When the settlement was announced, Gov. Kate Brown and Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum said the bulk of Oregon's money — \$65 million — would go toward reducing diesel emissions.

Multnomah County has the highest level of diesel emissions in the state, and African Americans are three times more likely to live in census tracts with high rates of diesel emissions. The CDC estimates 400 people get sick every year as a direct result of exposure to diesel exhaust. Other studies have linked

exposure to diesel exhaust with asthma, respiratory cancers, low birthweight and even poor school attendance.

Sen. Michael Dembrow (D-Portland), who introduced SB 1008 in March, said he's confident the bill can be restored to its original form and can pass.

Advocates were taken by surprise in late April when the senate's environment and natural resources committee failed to pass the bill — after Sen. Arnie Roblan (D-Coos Bay) unexpectedly changed his vote. Roblan could not be

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Microloans Give Needed Boost to Small Businesses

Micro-lender MESO receives \$1 million to fund underserved entrepreneurs

By Melanie Sevckenko
Of The Skanner News

Three years into launching her liquor company, Royalty Sprits, Portland native Chaunci King received her first business loan just two months ago.

With no investors or professional experience in distilling, King was in the position of so many small business hopefuls: down on her luck.

"You're a high risk as a new business. Traditional banks are just afraid if you're a startup," said King. "That's been a problem for many years. If you don't have a lot of collateral to put up, then it's even harder."

According to a 2016 report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, women make up only 22.7 percent of alcohol wholesalers — and only 10.6 percent are Black.

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Chaunci King is the owner of Royalty Sprits, which launched Miriu Vodka in 2014. King recently received a small business loan from micro-lender MESO.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LONDER LEARNING CENTER

Advocates of the Londer Learning Center attended a budget hearing on May 3 to support the program which is facing elimination due to budget cuts.

Budget Cuts Could Kill Londer Center

Program offers free education to any adult on probation or parole in Multnomah County

By Melanie Sevckenko
Of The Skanner News

Rhonda McLeod battled drug addiction for 30 years. In 2009, as a felon and parolee, she came to the Londer Learning Center in southwest Portland to take care of some unfinished business.

McLeod had never received a high school education. Yet with the help of the LLC, she earned a General Educational Development degree, or GED, over the course of three years.

"I really struggled with math, and they were amazing," McLeod said of the

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AP PHOTO/RODRIGO AND FILE

In this Jan. 30, 2010, file photo, people stand in the rubble of a collapsed building in the aftermath of a massive earthquake in Port-au-Prince.

Immigrants From Haiti May Lose Protected Status

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Recipes for Mother's Day Brunch

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