

FUEL: Importers, producers must reduce carbon content of fuels by 10 percent over the next decade

Continued from 1A

last week that Hayes, who is engaged to Gov. John Kitzhaber, was paid a total of \$118,000 in 2011 and 2012 through a fellowship with a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit called the Clean Economy Development Center. Although it is not clear whether Hayes worked on low-carbon fuels policy for the group, the Clean Economy Development Center conducted polling and organized a coalition in 2014 to push for an Oregon low-carbon fuel standard. The group that funded the work, The Energy Foundation in San Francisco, also separately paid Hayes \$50,000, The Oregonian reported.

Citing the contracts and ethics commission inquiries, Republican legislative leaders on Friday called for Democrats to suspend work on the low-carbon fuel bill, SB 324. Democrats went ahead Monday with a hearing on the bill at the Senate Committee On Environment

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— Sen. Ted Ferrioli, Senate Republican Leader

and Natural Resources. Democrats have majorities necessary to pass the bill in both the House and Senate, if there is a party line fight. Oregon already has a low-carbon fuels law, but it is set to sunset in May before the state actually implements the program. The Oregon Environmental Quality Commission voted in January to adopt regulations that will require fuel importers and producers to reduce the carbon content of transportation fuels by 10 percent over the next decade, starting in January 2016.

One way for companies to do this would be to blend more low-carbon ethanol and biodiesel into transportation fuels. Under the new rules, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality will also establish a system for entities such as electric vehicle charging stations to generate carbon credits; fuel producers and importers could purchase those credits to offset the carbon content in their gasoline and diesel.

At the Senate hearing on Monday, every seat was filled and testimony continued into the evening. The chair of the committee, Sen. Chris Edwards, D-Eugene, said if necessary the committee will continue to take testimony on Wednesday from people who signed up to speak on Monday.

Sen. Lee Beyer, D-Springfield, is not a member of the committee but testified in support of the bill. Beyer said that although some people say an Oregon fuel standard will have little impact on global warming, “you’ve got to start somewhere.”

Beyer said the legislation is an important piece of an organized push to reduce carbon emissions in West Coast states. “The effort includes the entire West Coast, from British Columbia, to Southern California,” Byer said.

Senate Republican Leader Sen. Ted Ferrioli, R-John Day, also is not a member of the committee but testified at the hearing. Ferrioli said lawmakers will be in Salem until the summer, and he urged the committee to take its time to vet the fuel standard bill.

“I would suggest to you that if someone wants to run this bill this week, they’re doing Oregonians a disservice because there are too many unanswered questions,” Ferrioli said.

FOREST: Strategic breaks could form a protective zone around sensitive resources

Continued from 1A

“It’s the first time in my career that I’ve truly seen this opportunity to work across boundaries,” Gamble said. “When you step back and look at it, the landscape will be treated as a whole, and not stopped at these public-private ownership lines.”

The East Face Vegetation project specifically addresses public land, including 1,224 acres owned by the Bureau of Reclamation’s Vale District. The project area is approximately 12 miles west of North Powder, and north of the North Fork John Day Wilderness Area.

Over the years, past firefighting and management activities have left the forest landscape “out of whack,” according to Gamble. As a result, tree stands have become increasingly overgrown with species that are less tolerant to fire, and smaller “lad-

der fuels” that allow flames to climb up into the forest canopy.

Proposed treatments include logging and prescribed burns to boost the forest’s resiliency. In particular, Gamble said they want to thin tree stands around existing roads and ridge tops to form strategic fuel breaks where firefighters could safely catch and knock down big blazes.

Strategic breaks could also form a protective zone around sensitive resources — like a catcher’s mitt — and allow firefighters to stage their resources out of harm’s way.

“Certainly, the landscape will be in condition where we have more options to address future wildfires,” Gamble said.

No new permanent roads are proposed within the project area, though foresters would reopen about 105 miles of existing closed roads in order to support logging operations.

Nearly 12 miles of temporary roads would also be built, though Gamble said half of those are in existing wheel tracks and would require little ground disturbance.

There are 366 total miles of roads in the project area, though nearly 65 percent have been closed and grown in after years of non-use. It is possible, Gamble said, that some of the reopened roads could remain open after the project is finished, but only if they do not pose any threat to resources or exceed the allowable road density.

Otherwise, temporary roads would be closed again and treated to prevent soil erosion.

Finally, the project would amend the Wallowa-Whitman forest plan twice to allow for logging in a designated old-growth forest near Twin Mountains, as well as within the allocated backcountry area near An-

thony Lakes.

The old-growth logging would not involve cutting old-growth trees, Gamble said, but again focus on smaller ladder fuels. As for Anthony Lakes, reducing the fuel load there would help protect the local wildland and urban interface.

“Treatment within those areas is probably a smart thing to do, but the old forest plan wasn’t quite there yet,” Gamble said.

Written comments for the East Face Vegetation Management Project can be sent to Gamble at the La Grande Ranger District Office, or emailed to bgamble@fs.fed.us. For more information about the proposal, contact the office at 541-963-7186.

Contact George Plaven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4547.



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