

Though Hayes is gone, acidification project lives on

Corrosive ocean water prevent oysters, clams from developing shells

By HILLARY BORRUD Capital Bureau

SALEM — Cylvia Hayes is no longer first lady, but many of the policies she pushed remain intact as top state priorities...

West Coast governors are working to arrange a meeting with senior officials in the White House and federal agencies to push for more spending on research into the problem...

Congress and President Barack Obama have recently increased spending on research into the issue, and Oregon and West Coast states want a larger piece of it.

The high-level meeting on ocean acidification research was supposed to occur this spring, but might not happen until later this year. Gabriela Goldfarb, natural resources policy adviser to Gov. Kate Brown, said she was confident the meeting will still take place despite the departure of Hayes...



EO Media Group photo

West Coast governors are working to arrange a meeting with senior officials in the White House and federal agencies to push for more spending on research into ocean acidification, an initiative championed by former first lady Cylvia Hayes.

one of her official initiatives and planned to participate in the meeting.

Hayes' fiance Gov. John Kitzhaber resigned in February amid criminal investigations into allegations the couple engaged in influence peddling. Hayes signed private contracts worth more than \$220,000 to work on policy issues on which she advised the governor.

Although Hayes' dual role raises ethics and legal questions, Goldfarb said the effects of ocean acidification are truly a problem for the shellfish industry. Scientists at Oregon State University

published research in 2012 that linked the phenomenon to a decline in oyster seed production at Whiskey Creek Shellfish Hatchery in Netarts Bay, and they published additional research earlier this year on the industry's vulnerability to the problem.

Goldfarb said research has shown ocean acidification has a greater impact on the West Coast than other parts of the nation, and for that reason the federal government should direct a greater share of its research funding to Oregon, California and Washington. The three states and British Columbia have also signed an agreement to coordinate their own spending on research into the problem.

School leaders say \$600M funding hike isn't enough

By PETER WONG Capital Bureau

SALEM — The political tug-of-war over the state school fund is about to intensify.

Legislative leaders want to put up \$7.235 billion — the figure included in a Jan. 14 framework proposed by the Legislature's chief budget writers — for votes of the House and Senate within the next month. Coupled with \$134 million more in property taxes projected by the Legislature's tax experts, and other factors, leaders say Oregon's 197 school districts will see a significant increase from 2013-14.

That message came from House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, and Rep. Peter Buckley, D-Ashland, House co-chairman of the Legislature's joint budget committee.

The proposed figure is more than the \$6.9 billion included in the budget that then-Gov. John Kitzhaber submitted to lawmakers back on Dec. 1. Lawmakers raised that figure by scaling back the \$800 million Kitzhaber proposed on targeted education priorities, as well as reducing other proposed state spending. They even reduced the amount Kitzhaber budgeted to continue current tax credits by about \$65 million, leaving just \$14 million for the revenue committees to use in deciding extensions of tax breaks that otherwise will expire at the end of this year.

But the upbeat assessment by legislative leaders is at odds with the views of school administrators and teachers, a parade of whom testified to a budget subcommittee that the \$7.235 billion figure will trigger cuts in staff and school days. They want \$7.5 billion at a minimum, and some are advocating \$7.85 billion, although few of them have proposed specifics about how lawmakers could reach that amount without further cuts in human services and public safety programs.

Usually lawmakers have waited until the May economic and revenue forecast before they make final decisions about the budget, before the start of the new cycle July 1. Because the most recent forecast projects that Oregon will have to return \$350 million in a "kicker" to taxpayers next year — in the form of a credit against their taxes — lawmakers say they are hard-pressed to promise more to schools right now. If the May 14 forecast does not project a "kicker," Buckley says lawmakers may be able to add to the \$7.235 billion in a supplemental end-of-session bill.

Corrections

The East Oregonian works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

Senate to vote on tax break for Internet companies

SALEM (AP) — The Oregon Senate is nearing a final vote on a bill giving tax breaks to Internet providers and companies that own data centers.

The bill's sponsor, Democratic Sen. Mark Hass of Beaverton, says the Senate will vote Tuesday on the measure, sending it to Gov. Kate Brown.

Hass says the Legislature will follow up later with a new bill to fix provisions that displeased Google. The company says it won't bring Google Fiber high-speed Internet to Portland without the changes.

The bill is a response to an Oregon Supreme Court decision last year that led to substantial increases in the property tax

bill for telecommunications companies. The decision threatened the growth of data centers, primarily in central and eastern Oregon.

Teenager sentenced to 14 years for rape

EUGENE (AP) — A teenager who raped a woman during a supervised group outing to a University of Oregon football game was sentenced Monday to more than 14 years in prison.

Jaime Tinoco, 17, and 11 other young offenders went on the field trip to Autzen Stadium last September with the Washington County Juvenile Department. Authorities say he slipped away from the group and attacked the woman.

Tinoco, who was tried as an adult, grinned Monday as his 39-year-old victim described

how she was repeatedly punched in the face while being raped near the stadium.

Lane County Judge Debra Vogt asked Tinoco why he was smiling as the victim — whose face required reconstructive surgery — recounted the attack.

"I don't know," Tinoco said. "I don't either," Vogt said.

The judge said it was concerning that Tinoco apparently gets pleasure from inflicting pain. She called the teen a dangerous man.

Identity released of man killed in Mount Hood explosion

PORTLAND (AP) — The state Medical Examiner's Office has ruled that the man killed last week in an explosion along a busy highway leading to Mount Hood east of Portland



committed suicide. The Mount Hood National Forest, where the blast occurred, said Monday that the Medical Examiner's Office identified the man as 24-year-old Jeffrey Roger Williams of Portland. The cause of death was injuries from the blast.

Investigators have said the explosion left a crater 11 feet wide alongside U.S. Highway 26 and was believed to have been produced by chemicals available on the Internet to make exploding targets.

National Forest spokeswoman Laura Pramuk says among the items found were fragments of a firearm.

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