

Road plan unlikely until 2017

By **PETER WONG**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Even though lawmakers say action on a funding plan for road and bridge repair and other transportation needs is unlikely before the 2016 election, advocates say it's not too early to start talking again.

“We need to pick up the work that has been done and not let it fall away,” said Craig Campbell, who represents the American Automobile Association of Oregon and also is president of the Oregon Transportation Forum coalition.

“We need to discuss it and work it,” said Campbell, whose coalition includes transportation users, governments and some environmental groups.

While House Speaker Tina Kotek vowed recently that “we still need a transportation package in this state,” she said the lead time required for laying out details is such that action is unlikely before the next long session in 2017.

Some say a good starting point is where a bipartisan group of eight lawmakers left off in the 2015 session.

“Elements of the proposal that emerged late in the legislative session represent an encouraging starting point for future discussions, especially

the proposed \$80 million in funding for transit systems,” said Chris Rall, Northwest field organizer for Transportation for America, a national group that backs state and federal funding.

The proposal attempted to couple funding for road and bridge work, and for public transit operations, with alternatives for greenhouse-gas reductions from transportation.

The funding for road and bridge work would have come from a 4-cent increase in Oregon's gasoline tax — now 30 cents per gallon — and increases in vehicle registration fees. Under the Oregon Constitution, those sources are earmarked.

For transit operations, a tax on employee wages was proposed for districts that already have authority to levy a payroll tax on employers. It would have raised \$80 million annually for two of Oregon's largest systems, TriMet and Lane Transit District, plus smaller systems in Wilsonville, Sandy and Canby.

Last year, the League of Oregon Cities and Association of Oregon Counties issued reports saying they are a combined \$500 million short each year of what they need to maintain roads and bridges.

The Oregon Department of Transportation maintains 8,000

miles of highways that carry about 60 percent of Oregon's traffic. It reported in 2014 that 87 percent of its pavement was in fair or better condition. While that is above its goal of 78 percent, ODOT also said it is unlikely to remain there without an infusion of cash in the next couple of years.

But the legislative proposal foundered on the alternatives proposed to a low-carbon fuel standard, which Democratic majorities pushed through over Republican opposition. While senators from both parties were willing to craft alternatives, House Democrats and environmental groups were unwilling to jettison the standard after just three months.

“I was assured there were alternative ways of approaching this issue that would be acceptable, but that turned out not to be true,” said Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario, one of the bipartisan negotiators.

One of the alternatives, which mirrors a potential 2016 ballot measure sponsored by fuel distributors, would have proposed graduated reductions in the carbon content of fuel. But the total reduction would have amounted to 5 percent, less than the 10 percent set by the standard over a decade.

Another alternative overstated the reduction of green-

house-gas emissions projected through improved traffic flows to relieve congestion.

“Given more time, we could have refined the numbers and shown a carbon reduction that would have beaten the low-carbon fuel standard,” said Sen. Jeff Kruse, R-Roseburg, another negotiator. “But now we have not been given that opportunity.”

Republicans argued that the standard would result in higher fuel prices, which they said would be too much on top of a smaller tax increase. A tax increase requires 60 percent supermajorities for approval, and that means at least one Republican in the current House.

“I think the most important thing for us to know in advance is how much give there is in the standard,” Bentz said. “If they are going to refuse to modify it in any way, this conversation is going to be pretty short.”

But Andrea Durbin, executive director of the Oregon Environmental Council, said Oregon needs both the standard and a funding plan put forth by the Oregon Transportation Forum, which it is a member of.

“To put one against the other is a false choice and helps no one,” Durbin said.

Oregon Board of Forestry punts on no-logging buffers

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — The Oregon Board of Forestry has punted its decision whether to expand no-logging buffers around streams to prevent water temperatures from rising after harvest.

After hearing testimony from timber and conservation groups on July 23, the board formed a subcommittee that will narrow the range of possible options for consideration during a future meeting in September or October.

Supporters and opponents of expanding Oregon's no-cut buffers, currently set at 20 feet from either side of a stream, didn't seem to have appetite for compromise during the recent hearing.

Representatives of environmental and fishing groups claimed that buffers of 90-100 feet would not always be adequate for protecting fish, while small woodland owners and commercial timber operators said that increasing buffers to 70 feet would be economically devastating.

The legal implications of increasing forestry regulations were also discussed.

Under Measure 49, a ballot initiative passed by Oregon voters in 2007, state and local governments must either waive new regulations or compensate landowners for lost land value in many circumstances.

That would not apply to expanding no-cut buffers because the rule change pertains to meeting federal water quality standards, said Richard Whitman, natural resource advisor to Gov. Kate Brown.

State regulations that are required by federal law are exempt from Measure 49, he said.

Dave Hunnicutt, executive director of the Oregonians in Action property rights group, disagreed with this assessment.

Measure 49 only exempts state regulations that are mandated by the federal government, but not those that would merely cause the state to lose some federal funding, he said.

In this case, the buffers aren't required by federal statute and they clearly reduce property values, said Hunnicutt.

“Those are the triggers for a Measure 49 claim,” he said.

Hunnicutt said that enacting the buffers virtually guarantees the state will spend hundreds of thousands of dollars litigating the issue.

Sybil Ackerman, a board member and advisor to philanthropic groups, said that any regulations the board does impose must adhere as closely as possible to achieving federal water quality standards rather than meeting other objectives.

Hundreds fighting wildfire near Walla Walla

WALLA WALLA, Wash. (AP) — Crews fighting a wildfire in southeast Washington that has destroyed one home and threatens dozens others are working to prevent flames from reaching a watershed that provides drinking water for the city of Walla Walla.

Firefighters are removing fuels and securing lines to prevent it from reaching the boundary of the Mill Creek Watershed, fire spokeswoman Amber Mahoney said Thursday.

“We're doing a lot of fuel reduction work to prevent the fire from jumping that line,” she said. The fire has not burned into the watershed.

The Blue Creek fire has scorched nearly 9 square miles of grass, shrubs and timber about 10 miles east of Walla Walla, a city of 60,000 people. It was about 5 percent contained



Greg Lehman/Walla Walla Union-Bulletin via AP
In this photo taken Wednesday, fire retardant is dumped from the belly of a tanker plane onto a ridge near a cabin in the Blue Creek Fire area, east of Walla Walla, Wash.

as of Thursday morning, and an estimated 1,000 firefighters were tackling the blaze in steep, challenging terrain.

Incident Commander Mike Ciraulo said Wednesday it is the

highest priority fire currently burning in the U.S.

Mahoney said evacuation orders are in effect for two rural areas. Several dozen homes are threatened as the wildfire burns

in grass, shrubs and timber on state-protected private land. Sections of forest roads in the Umatilla National Forest have been closed.

About 200 people attended a community meeting Wednesday night, Mahoney said.

The fire that started Monday was likely human-caused, though it's still under investigation.

The city of Walla Walla has been sampling and testing its ground water wells so they could be used in case the fire does reach the watershed and those wells are needed, said Mori Struve, the city's public works operations manager.

The city is also working with the help of others to create a defensible space around where fresh water from Mill Creek gets pumped into the city's water system.

Corrections

Wednesday's story on Pendleton's deadly fire misidentified Alfredo Lopez, one of the men who tried to help during the emergency.

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.

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AccuWeather.com Forecast

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Mostly sunny and pleasant	Partly sunny; breezy in the p.m.	Chance for an afternoon t-storm	Plenty of sunshine	Sunny and beautiful
87° 61°	80° 56°	76° 55°	79° 53°	86° 60°
90° 62°	83° 57°	81° 53°	83° 52°	90° 57°

ALMANAC

PENDLETON
through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	84°	51°
Normals	90°	60°
Records	111° (1928)	41° (1924)

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"
Month to date Trace
Normal month to date 0.23"
Year to date 5.00"
Last year to date 7.71"
Normal year to date 7.81"

HERMISTON
through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	87°	58°
Normals	90°	59°
Records	108° (1959)	41° (1934)

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"
Month to date 0.09"
Normal month to date 0.16"
Year to date 3.25"
Last year to date 4.23"
Normal year to date 5.86"

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	5:29 a.m.
Sunset tonight	8:34 p.m.
Moonrise today	2:08 p.m.
Moonset today	12:11 a.m.

Full	Last	New	First
July 31	Aug 6	Aug 14	Aug 22

REGIONAL FORECAST

Coastal Oregon: A shower or two across the north today; sunshine in central parts. Mostly cloudy in the south.

Eastern and Central Oregon: Pleasant today with sunshine and patchy clouds. Partly cloudy tonight.

Western Washington: Mainly cloudy today; a brief shower or two, but dry across the south.

Eastern Washington: Mostly sunny today. Partly cloudy tonight. Partly sunny tomorrow.

Cascades: Brilliant sunshine today. Partly cloudy tonight. Clouds and sun tomorrow; cooler.

Northern California: Low clouds followed by sunshine at the coast today; sunny elsewhere.

REGIONAL CITIES

	Today			Sat.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Astoria	68	58	sh	67	55	c
Baker City	85	49	s	81	50	pc
Bend	80	48	s	73	43	pc
Brookings	68	55	c	69	54	pc
Burns	84	46	s	82	47	s
Enterprise	83	50	s	78	47	pc
Eugene	84	58	s	76	51	c
Heppner	85	55	s	78	51	pc
Hermiston	90	62	s	83	57	pc
John Day	85	51	s	81	50	pc
Klamath Falls	82	47	s	81	48	s
La Grande	86	50	s	79	49	pc
Meacham	79	45	s	72	41	pc
Medford	90	59	s	86	59	s
Newport	65	57	c	64	54	c
North Bend	69	57	s	67	54	c
Ontario	91	60	s	90	62	s
Pasco	91	63	s	84	58	pc
Pendleton	87	61	s	80	56	pc
Portland	82	62	pc	74	57	c
Redmond	84	47	s	77	44	pc
Salem	83	62	pc	76	54	c
Spokane	82	60	s	77	55	pc
Ukiah	83	50	s	74	46	pc
Vancouver	81	62	pc	73	56	c
Walla Walla	89	66	s	83	61	pc
Yakima	90	57	s	81	52	pc

WORLD CITIES

	Today			Sat.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Beijing	89	73	pc	92	75	pc
Hong Kong	89	81	t	89	80	t
Jerusalem	95	71	s	93	68	s
London	64	53	r	69	53	pc
Mexico City	74	54	t	77	54	t
Moscow	72	54	pc	72	51	pc
Paris	79	56	sh	72	53	pc
Rome	91	73	s	88	73	s
Seoul	79	76	r	81	75	r
Sydney	68	50	sh	67	49	s
Tokyo	88	79	t	95	79	pc

WINDS

	Today	Saturday
(in mph)		
Boardman	WSW 10-20	WSW 10-20
Pendleton	WSW 8-16	W 8-16

UV INDEX TODAY

2	4	7	7	5	2
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8 a.m. 10 a.m. Noon 2 p.m. 4 p.m. 6 p.m.

0-2, Low 3-5, Moderate 6-7, High; 8-10, Very High; 11+, Extreme

The higher the AccuWeather.com UV Index™ number, the greater the need for eye and skin protection.

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NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY

Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.

Shows: s-tstorms, rain, flurries, snow, ice

Fronts: cold front, warm front, stationary front

Pressure: H (high), L (low)

Summary: Drenching showers and thunderstorms will affect the Southeast today, while severe storms blast the Upper Midwest. Showers will dot northern New England. Only spotty showers are forecast for the interior West.

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 104° in Needles, Calif. **Low 36°** in Truckee, Calif.

NATIONAL CITIES

	Today			Sat.				Today			Sat.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W		Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Albuquerque	91	67	pc	94	67	pc	Louisville	89	67	s	90	72	s
Atlanta	88	71	t	88	71	t	Memphis	92	76	t	94	76	pc
Atlantic City	83	68	s	83	72	s	Miami	91	78	t	88	77	t
Baltimore	87	63	s	88	69	s	Minneapolis	84	69	s	81	65	t
Billing	88	61	s	89	59	s	Minneapolis	87	68	t	88	69	s
Birmingham	91	72	t	93	73	t	Nashville	89	68	s	91	70	s
Boise	89	61	s	88	60	s	New Orleans	94	79	pc	95	79	t
Boston	78	64	pc	72	62	pc	New York City	85	70	s	85	72	s
Charleston, SC	88	73	t	88	71	t	Oklahoma City	78	53	pc	87	72	s
Charleston, WV	86	63	s	88	67	t	Omaha	95	75	pc	90	74	t
Chicago	85	70	s	85	66	t	Philadelphia	87	68	s	89	73	s
Cleveland	82	66	s	86	68	pc	Phoenix	104	85	pc	107	85	s
Dallas	100	80	s	101	79	s	Portland, ME	74	57	pc	67	56	c
Denver	92	61	pc	92	61	pc	Providence	82	63	pc	80	64	pc
Detroit	86	68	s	86	65	t	Raleigh	85	66	pc	87	67	pc
El Paso	98	74	s	100	74	s	Rapid City	86	50	t	90	60	s
Fairbanks	76	58	pc	74	58	c	Reno	88	57	s	87	56	s
Fargo	85	64	t	88	67	s	Sacramento	88	58	s	90	59	s
Honolulu	90	77	pc	90	77	pc	St. Louis	89	75	pc	92	77	t
Houston	97	76	s	99	78	s	Salt Lake City	90	66	s	90	66	s
Indianapolis	84	63	s	86	69	pc	San Diego	81	69	pc	81	68	pc
Jacksonville	89	72	t	88	72	t	San Francisco	71	59	pc	71	60	pc
Kansas City	94	75	pc	93	76	pc	Seattle	70	58	sh	71	56	c
Las Vegas	100	74	s	101	75	s	Tucson	96	76	pc	100	78	s
Little Rock	96	78	pc	97	77	s	Washington, DC	89	72	s	91	75	s
Los Angeles	84	65	pc	85	66	pc	Wichita	101	76	s	100	78	pc