

# PUC recommends more taxpayer-funded solar incentives

By **CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE**  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — The state's public utility commission has recommended the Legislature consider adopting taxpayer-funded incentive programs for solar energy projects.

The PUC spent the past few months evaluating and gathering input on the state's solar incentive programs, and voted Tuesday to pass along the substance of its recommendations to the Legislature.

The state already has several taxpayer-funded programs intended to encourage the development of solar energy projects. Some of those incentives are scheduled to sunset soon.

Another handful of ratepayer-funded programs are paid for only by customers of specific utilities.

The report states that if the Legislature "wants to capture the full social and economic development benefits" of systems that convert solar energy into electricity, that taxpayer-funded incentives — programs that all Oregonians, regardless of utility provider, pay for and reap the benefits of — are the way to go.

The PUC released two preliminary drafts of the report — required by legislation in 2015 — earlier this year.

Solar companies had objected to the PUC's initial description in an early draft of the solar energy landscape in Oregon as "robust."

Jeff Bissonette, the executive director of the Oregon Solar Energy Industries Association, said in public comments Tuesday the final draft was an improvement from initial drafts.

He said that solar energy was still an emerging industry and that he hoped the demand for solar energy in Oregon would remain stable. He added that his group was preparing an Oregon-specific solar business plan to evaluate the future potential of solar energy.

The commission noted in its final report that it's difficult to calculate the benefits and costs of each incentive program designed to encourage solar energy development, as projects or individual customers are often eligible for more than one incentive program.

Oregonians who benefit from any of the state's incentives can still receive a federal solar investment

tax credit, according to the report.

A joint interim legislative committee is currently conducting a review of the Oregon Department of Energy, which has faced intense scrutiny in the wake of the troubled Business Energy Tax Credit program. That program ended in 2014.

In light of the Department of Energy review, the PUC did not offer specific recommendations on what form taxpayer incentives should take, but that the Legislature should study continuing an exemption on property taxes for people who have their own solar photovoltaic (PV) arrays.

An array or other renewable energy system can increase a home's value, but since 2011, the state has allowed property tax assessments to leave out any increase in property value resulting from the installation of a solar PV system. Currently that exemption is scheduled to run out in 2018.

The commission also recommended legislators look at creating taxpayer-supported programs that incentivize residential and small commercial solar developments.

The second recommendation in the PUC's report is tied into another piece of legislation that laid out requirements for how much of the state's energy should come from small-scale solar energy projects.

That legislation, Oregon SB 1547, also known as the coal-to-clean bill, required electric companies credit owners or subscribers to so-called community solar projects in such a way that reflects the value that solar energy provides the electricity grid, a concept called "resource value."

The PUC is in the process of determining that value. After that, the PUC plans to evaluate what the benefits and costs of using that resource value-driven methodology would be, according to the report.

Finally, the PUC also recommended that the Energy Trust of Oregon, which administers a solar electricity program paid for by a portion of public purpose charges on Portland General Electric and PacifiCorp bills, should modify its use of those funds to support high-value projects that provide "unique benefits" to the utility system.

An example of a unique benefit would be a project that improves reliability, according to the report.

# TRIAL: Closing arguments for other defendants on Wednesday

Continued from 1A

The exception was Bundy, who backed his chair away from the defense table, swiveled to the left and looked at Knight and the jury for two hours.

Bundy's attorney, Marcus Mumford, followed Knight, delivering a four-hour argument that included civics-related quotes from former president Woodrow Wilson, former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart and other figures from the past.

Mumford said Bundy and his fellow occupiers made a peaceful stand — but a determined one — against what they saw as federal government overreach in the prosecution of Harney County ranchers Dwight and Steven Hammond.

"The problem wasn't with the employees," Mumford said. "It was with their employer, the federal government. It won't respect its limits."

Mumford reiterated many points that Bundy made when he testified for three days earlier this month, including that the presence

"The problem wasn't with the employees. It was with their employer, the federal government. It won't respect its limits."

— **Marcus Mumford**, Ammon Bundy's attorney

of firearms ensured the protest wouldn't be immediately stormed by armed federal agents.

The lawyer said the plan was to take ownership of the refuge by adverse possession, occupying it for years and then turning it over to local officials.

Mumford said Bundy expected government officials to dispute the claim, and that would force them to prove in court they have proper title to the land.

As part of that effort, Mumford said, the protesters made improvements to the refuge and didn't trash the place as the government claims.

He displayed a photo of an occupier with a broom, supposedly sweeping up rat feces that government workers had allowed to build over time.

"Is it a conspiracy to clean up rat poop?" Mumford asked. "Or it is responsible?"

Knight said in his argument that the plan to stake a claim through adverse possession proves there was a conspiracy.

The prosecutor said the conspiracy started two months before the armed takeover, when Bundy and another out-of-state activist met with Harney County Sheriff Dave Ward and vowed there would be civil unrest if the sheriff didn't protect the Hammonds from returning to prison.

Lawyers for the other six defendants will present their closing arguments Wednesday. One defendant, Ammon Bundy's older brother Ryan, is acting as his own attorney. He plans to address the jury for an hour.

## BRIEFLY

### Recreational pot sales reach \$160M in 2016

EUGENE (AP) — Marijuana dispensaries have sold more than \$160 million worth of recreational marijuana so far in 2016.

The Register-Guard reports that according to sales tax figures released Monday by the state Department of Revenue, more than \$160 million worth of pot was sold in the first nine months of the year, bringing in \$40.2 million in sales tax payments.

State-regulated medical marijuana dispensaries charge a 25 percent sales tax to customers for recreational marijuana products.

The figures come weeks after the Oregon Liquor Control Commission licensed the first retailers in its recreational marijuana program. Those retailers charge a 17 percent state sales tax for all recreational marijuana products.

Medical dispensaries must become licensed with the OLCC if they want to continue to sell recreational pot in 2017.

### Wildlife groups offer \$20K for information on wolf's death

BEND (AP) — Wildlife groups are offering \$20,000 for information about a female wolf found dead in Oregon.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service described the wolf's death as an illegal killing of an animal from an endangered species.

The agency is offering \$5,000 for information.

The Center for Biological Diversity is also offering \$10,000 for information.

The Humane Society of the United States is offering another \$5,000.

The 3-year-old gray wolf known as OR 28 was originally from the Mount Emily pack and was part of the newly forming Silver Lake pack.

She gave birth to a pup earlier this year. Her body was found in northwest Lake County.

USFWS would not reveal how the wolf died or other details.

The agency is performing a necropsy on OR 28.

### Some workers at Hanford exposed to radioactive waste

RICHLAND, Wash. (AP) — Some workers at a Hanford Nuclear Reservation tank farm have had their skin contaminated with low levels of radioactive waste.

The incident occurred Tuesday morning.

The Tri-City Herald reports the workers were in a pit at the AX Tank Farm when contamination was detected in the pit.

They backed out of the area, but a survey found low levels of radioactive contamination on their skin.

Equipment is being installed in the AX Tank Farm to allow waste to be emptied from leak-prone, underground nuclear waste storage tanks.

Hanford for decades made plutonium for nuclear weapons and now is cleaning up a vast quantity of radioactive waste from that work.

## 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.

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## AccuWeather.com Forecast

| TODAY                       | THURSDAY                   | FRIDAY       | SATURDAY                         | SUNDAY               |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
|                             |                            |              |                                  |                      |
| Sunshine mixing with clouds | Mostly cloudy with showers | Partly sunny | Intervals of clouds and sunshine | More clouds than sun |

| PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST |     |     |     |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 63°                            | 50° | 67° | 50° | 60° |
| 50°                            | 67° | 45° | 61° | 46° |
| 62°                            | 44° |     |     |     |

| HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST |     |     |     |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 65°                            | 50° | 69° | 51° | 64° |
| 50°                            | 69° | 44° | 64° | 45° |
| 65°                            | 40° |     |     |     |

### ALMANAC

**PENDLETON**  
through 3 p.m. yesterday

| TEMPERATURE | HIGH       | LOW        |
|-------------|------------|------------|
| Yesterday   | 56°        | 44°        |
| Normals     | 63°        | 39°        |
| Records     | 85° (1940) | 20° (1917) |

**PRECIPITATION**  
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.04"  
Month to date 1.22"  
Normal month to date 0.59"  
Year to date 9.29"  
Last year to date 5.89"  
Normal year to date 9.57"

**HERMISTON**  
through 3 p.m. yesterday

| TEMPERATURE | HIGH       | LOW        |
|-------------|------------|------------|
| Yesterday   | 61°        | 40°        |
| Normals     | 64°        | 38°        |
| Records     | 85° (1940) | 23° (1976) |

**PRECIPITATION**  
24 hours ending 3 p.m. Trace  
Month to date 0.90"  
Normal month to date 0.33"  
Year to date 6.34"  
Last year to date 3.71"  
Normal year to date 6.92"

### SUN AND MOON

|                | Last | New        | First | Full |
|----------------|------|------------|-------|------|
| Sunrise today  |      | 7:17 a.m.  |       |      |
| Sunset tonight |      | 6:02 p.m.  |       |      |
| Moonrise today |      | 9:12 p.m.  |       |      |
| Moonset today  |      | 11:22 a.m. |       |      |

**Coastal Oregon:** A shower in central parts today; rain across the north. Partly sunny in the south.

**Eastern and Central Oregon:** Periods of clouds and sunshine today; warmer in central parts.

**Western Washington:** Periods of rain today; any time at the coast, in the afternoon elsewhere.

**Eastern Washington:** Partly sunny today.

**Cascades:** Some sunshine giving way to clouds today; warmer.

**Northern California:** Mostly sunny today. Pleasant and warmer in central parts; pleasant at the coast.

|               | Today |    |    | Thu. |    |    |
|---------------|-------|----|----|------|----|----|
|               | Hi    | Lo | W  | Hi   | Lo | W  |
| Astoria       | 59    | 54 | r  | 63   | 48 | sh |
| Baker City    | 55    | 38 | pc | 55   | 34 | c  |
| Bend          | 60    | 46 | pc | 64   | 46 | sh |
| Brookings     | 62    | 52 | pc | 63   | 53 | pc |
| Burns         | 55    | 29 | pc | 62   | 30 | pc |
| Enterprise    | 54    | 40 | pc | 55   | 40 | sh |
| Eugene        | 59    | 52 | r  | 63   | 51 | r  |
| Heppner       | 62    | 48 | pc | 65   | 47 | sh |
| Hermiston     | 65    | 50 | pc | 69   | 51 | sh |
| John Day      | 59    | 46 | pc | 65   | 44 | c  |
| Klamath Falls | 60    | 30 | pc | 65   | 33 | pc |
| La Grande     | 59    | 45 | pc | 59   | 44 | sh |
| Meacham       | 56    | 44 | pc | 57   | 43 | sh |
| Medford       | 66    | 45 | pc | 71   | 50 | pc |
| Newport       | 57    | 53 | r  | 59   | 50 | sh |
| North Bend    | 63    | 56 | c  | 64   | 53 | r  |
| Ontario       | 61    | 37 | pc | 63   | 39 | pc |
| Pasco         | 63    | 47 | pc | 66   | 46 | sh |
| Pendleton     | 63    | 50 | pc | 67   | 50 | sh |
| Portland      | 58    | 53 | r  | 63   | 49 | r  |
| Redmond       | 61    | 42 | pc | 66   | 42 | sh |
| Salem         | 58    | 53 | r  | 63   | 50 | r  |
| Spokane       | 54    | 44 | pc | 53   | 43 | r  |
| Ukiah         | 58    | 43 | pc | 61   | 43 | sh |
| Vancouver     | 57    | 53 | r  | 64   | 50 | r  |
| Walla Walla   | 62    | 51 | pc | 62   | 50 | sh |
| Yakima        | 59    | 46 | pc | 63   | 40 | c  |

|             | Today |    |    | Thu. |    |    |
|-------------|-------|----|----|------|----|----|
|             | Hi    | Lo | W  | Hi   | Lo | W  |
| Beijing     | 73    | 53 | pc | 57   | 49 | r  |
| Hong Kong   | 85    | 77 | sh | 88   | 78 | pc |
| Jerusalem   | 75    | 58 | pc | 75   | 59 | s  |
| London      | 58    | 46 | pc | 58   | 45 | pc |
| Mexico City | 76    | 50 | pc | 75   | 54 | pc |
| Moscow      | 39    | 32 | c  | 38   | 31 | sf |
| Paris       | 58    | 44 | pc | 57   | 44 | sh |
| Rome        | 70    | 60 | pc | 71   | 56 | pc |
| Seoul       | 74    | 54 | s  | 77   | 56 | s  |
| Sydney      | 72    | 58 | s  | 72   | 60 | sh |
| Tokyo       | 73    | 65 | pc | 76   | 60 | pc |

|              | Today    |           | Thursday |          |
|--------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|
|              | Boardman | Pendleton | ENE 3-6  | SSW 8-16 |
| <b>WINDS</b> |          |           |          |          |

| UV INDEX TODAY |   |   |   |   |   |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0              | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

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.

**National Summary:** Record warmth will continue in the East today. Rain and storms will expand across the mid-Mississippi and Ohio valleys. Hot Santa Ana winds will elevate the fire threat in Southern California.

**Yesterday's National Extremes:** (for the 48 contiguous states)  
**High 100°** in McAllen, Texas  
**Low 8°** in Big Piney, Wyo.

| NATIONAL CITIES |       |    |    |       |    |    |
|-----------------|-------|----|----|-------|----|----|
|                 | Today |    |    | Thur. |    |    |
|                 | Hi    | Lo | W  | Hi    | Lo | W  |
| Albuquerque     | 74    | 44 | s  | 68    | 43 | s  |
| Atlanta         | 89    | 67 | s  | 87    | 58 | pc |
| Atlanta City    | 78    | 63 | pc | 73    | 63 | pc |
| Baltimore       | 82    | 61 | pc | 77    | 61 | pc |
| Billings        | 55    | 35 | pc | 60    | 43 | pc |
| Birmingham      | 90    | 67 | pc | 87    | 53 | pc |
| Boise           | 59    | 43 | s  | 65    | 44 | pc |
| Boston          | 77    | 55 | pc | 61    | 55 | sh |
| Charleston, SC  | 86    | 63 | s  | 85    | 64 | pc |
| Charleston, WV  | 82    | 62 | pc | 82    | 52 | c  |
| Chicago         | 69    | 51 | pc | 58    | 41 | sh |
| Cleveland       | 71    | 55 | c  | 65    | 49 | r  |
| Dallas          | 89    | 64 | pc | 75    | 53 | pc |
| Denver          | 58    | 30 | pc | 63    | 37 | s  |
| Detroit         | 71    | 52 | pc | 59    | 45 | r  |
| El Paso         | 86    | 56 | s  | 74    | 49 | s  |
| Fairbanks       | 31    | 13 | s  | 25    | 12 | c  |
| Fargo           | 52    | 31 | pc | 49    | 34 | pc |
| Honolulu        | 86    | 75 | sh | 85    | 74 | pc |
| Houston         | 91    | 72 | pc | 85    | 59 | t  |
| Indianapolis    | 73    | 54 | t  | 59    | 46 | pc |
| Jacksonville    | 84    | 63 | s  | 84    | 63 | pc |
| Kansas City     | 69    | 48 | pc | 62    | 39 |    |