

LOBBYISTS: Clients must report total amount spent on lobbying expenses to ethics commission

Continued from 1A

others also have people — sometimes from their own hometowns — who work as lobbyists on their behalf.

Tammy Dennee

Tammy Dennee, for example, represents dairy farms like ThreeMile Canyon Farms near Boardman as an in-house lobbyist for the Oregon Dairy Farmers Association. She previously lived in Pendleton, where she served as executive director for the Oregon Wheat Growers League.

One of the bills she was most focused on last week was SB197, the “dairy air” Senate bill that would require setting up air monitoring for dairies. Farmers want to make sure that the bill does not overly burden their operations.

“The details of that are still in flux so we are monitoring that very closely,” she said.

On Monday, an alternative to SB 197 was made possible by Three Mile Canyon Farms and Lost Valley Ranch, a proposed large dairy nearby, which have agreed to devise “best management practices” to control emissions and prevent haze in the Columbia Gorge, said Sen. Mike Dembrow, D-Portland.

Dembrow, chair of the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee, will participate in a work group setting best management practices, along with representatives of the Oregon Department of Agriculture and Oregon State University.

Tuesday is the deadline for bills to either head to the House and Senate floor or die in committee, so lobbyists were busy last week trying to shore up last-minute support or opposition for bills affecting those they represent.

Dennee said when the legislative session is over she will switch her focus to state agencies that will be tasked with rulemaking for the bills that passed. She will also spend plenty of time traveling around the state to meet with dairy farmers, educating lawmakers and the public about dairy issues and monitoring new developments in the industry that may be the subject of future legislation.

“Anything affecting our producers, anything and everything, we pay attention to that,” she said.

Clients of registered lobbyists are required to submit a report to the Oregon Ethics Commission each year on the total amount of money they spent on lobbying expenses (which does not include campaign contribu-

tions). For 2015 those reports totaled more than \$35.86 million between 1,084 different clients. The Oregon Dairy Farmers Association spent \$37,992 on lobbying that year.

Katie Fast

Katie Fast is executive director of Oregonians for Food and Shelter, which represents growers, manufacturers and distributors on issues pertaining to pesticides, fertilizers and biotechnology. One of their priority bills, which would require at least seven days’ advance notice to the State Forestry Department of the time and location of aerial application of pesticides in privately owned forestland, was up for a committee vote on Thursday.

“They have to apply when weather conditions are optimal,” she said, explaining why pesticide applicators opposed the bill.

For Fast, who has a degree in agricultural sciences from Oregon State University, these issues are personal as well as professional — she grew up on a family farm and she and her husband own a farm outside of Salem.

“Everything going on affects us personally,” she said.

Oregonians for Food and Shelter spent \$37,470 on lobbying expenditures in 2015.

Danelle Romain

While some lobbyists are employees of a specific corporation or association, others work as an independent contractor representing multiple groups. In-house lobbyists tend to be subject-matter specialists while contract lobbyists tend to come to the profession via law school.

Danelle Romain of The Romain Group said her law degree helps greatly when reading bills that are hundreds of pages long. Being an attorney can help her know when a single instance of the word “may” being changed to “shall” could completely change the bill’s impact on the way a client is allowed to operate.

Romain’s clients with Eastern Oregon ties include the Oregon Beer and Wine Distributors Association, Oregon People’s Utility District Association, Oregon Lions Sight & Hearing Foundation and the Oregon Fuels Association (which spent \$48,000 on lobbying in 2015). One of the bills she is working on this session would allow self-service gas 24 hours a day in Oregon counties with less than 40,000 residents.

Romain said an important part of lobbying is helping legislators and agencies making the rules to under-

stand her clients’ industries while in return helping her clients understand proposed legislation. It’s a business of relationships, she said, and working together to find solutions everyone is willing to accept.

“It’s fun being a lobbyist, and helping shape state policy,” she said.

Craig Campbell

Campbell is also an independent lobbyist. Among The Victory Group’s 12 clients are Umatilla Electric Cooperative, Oregon Association of Hospitals & Health Systems, Oregon Association of Chiefs of Police and Oregon State Sheriff’s Association. Umatilla Electric Cooperative spent \$279,423 on lobbying in 2015.

Campbell influenced his first piece of legislation at age 12 during his childhood butterfly collecting phase, when he helped his father Larry Campbell, a state representative at the time, draft legislation to make the Oregon swallowtail butterfly the state butterfly.

From his college days on, he worked in the state capitol in one capacity or another, including as a legislative assistant and on staff for Gov. Ted Kulongoski, where he helped create the Oregon Youth Authority.

Campbell said over the years Salem has gotten less about policy and more about politics, with fewer instances of people disagreeing on the House or Senate floor but then going out for a beer together at the end of the night. That makes lobbying more difficult, as does the addition of a short legislative session in even-numbered years.

Lobbyists and politicians used to have about 18 months for “thoughtful discussions” about legislation and budgets that would work for both sides, Campbell said, but now they have half that time to come to an understanding before the next session. It is still important to work with the opposite side and other lobbyists, however, if you want a seat at the table.

“You can just be ‘I oppose,’ but that really doesn’t help you in the long run,” he said.

Successful lobbyists have “no permanent friends and no permanent enemies,” as the saying in Salem goes, because with 3,000 bills considered each session, two lobbyists can be working together on one piece of legislation but be on opposite sides for another.

Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536. The Capital Bureau contributed to this story.

GUNS: NRA, local gun rights advocates are opposed to the bill

Continued from 1A

Boquist’s son, Seth Sprague, a 31-year-old U.S. Navy veteran, used a firearm to commit suicide Feb. 16, 2016. The tragedy spurred Boquist to work with Senate Majority Ginny Burdick, D-Portland, to design legislation that could help families intervene when a loved one threatens to take their own life. The bill is modeled after a measure voters approved last year in Washington.

The National Rifle Association and local gun rights advocates are opposed to the bill.

“This bill allows for a protective order to take away your Second Amendment rights, not because of a criminal conviction or mental health adjudication but based on third-party allegations, using an evidentiary standard that falls far below what is normally required for removing a firearm,” said Keely Hopkins, the NRA’s Oregon liaison.

The bill also does nothing to stop someone from killing themselves in some other way or to provide treatment for the

individual, Hopkins said.

Yuille knows the exact date her father, Michael Passalacqua of Milwaukie, went to a gun shop and bought the firearm he used to kill himself. She found a receipt dated July 18, 2016, after his death.

“If I had known that a tool like the extreme risk protection order was available I would have used it, and my dad probably wouldn’t have been able to go buy a gun that day,” Yuille testified Monday during a hearing on the bill.

Two other bills, proposed by Gov. Kate Brown, would close several gun purchase loopholes and study reasons for gun purchase denials.

One bill closes the so-called “Charleston” loophole that allows applicants to buy a gun within three days regardless of whether Oregon State Police has completed a mandatory background check on the buyer. Another bill bans people who have stalking convictions or boyfriends who have domestic violence convictions from having a gun.

VOICE: ‘They want to know what the thoughts are of the people back home’

Continued from 1A

let the legislators know they supported HB2996 and SB849, which would allow first-time home buyers to put aside up to \$50,000 over 10 years tax-free in order to save up for a down-payment. They also supported rebates for replacement of wood-burning stoves and low-interest loans for septic tank repairs, and talked about the need for legislation addressing the shortage of appraisers in the state. They opposed a bill that would make landlords pay up to \$4,500 to tenants in no-cause evictions.

“According to Sen. Hansell this bill has failed, so we’re happy about that,” she said.

Frederickson said the Realtors’ annual day at the capitol is always interesting, and a good way to network.

On Wednesday citizens also traveled to the capitol to testify about various bills in

front of committees. A busload of protesters from the Portland area also thronged the capitol steps, holding signs about the effects of homelessness under a giant banner reading “Oregon Families Need Rent Control.”

Free public online access to everything from bill amendments to video of committee hearings has made it easier than ever for the public to get involved in lobbying their legislators.

Katie Fast, director of Oregonians for Food and Shelter, said that while lobbyists who know the system can be effective in educating legislators about an issue, lawmakers take seriously the concerns of their constituents who take the time to come to Salem, write a letter or make a phone call.

“They want to know what the thoughts are of the people back home,” she said. “A lot of times that’s more powerful than what I can do.”



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