

Trump signs executive order to speed infrastructure construction

Includes revoking earlier executive order concerning flood plains

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Tuesday he has signed a new executive order intended to make more efficient the federal permitting process for construction of transportation, water and other infrastructure projects without harming the environment.

Trump's order includes revoking an earlier executive order signed by President Barack Obama concerning projects built in flood plains, White House officials said. The Obama order required that such projects built with federal aid take rising sea levels into account. Trump has suggested the predicted risks from sea level rise driven by climate change are overblown.

Describing his action, Trump said projects will still be subjected to environmental safeguards.

"It's going to be quick, it's going to be a very streamlined process," Trump said. "And by the way, if it doesn't meet environmental

safeguards, we're not going to approve it. Very simple. We're not going to approve it."

Building trade groups had urged Trump to revoke the flood plain order, saying it was overly bureaucratic and increased the cost of projects. The Obama order was especially unwieldy because it didn't standardize across the government how sea level rise was to be taken into account, which left each federal agency to come up with its own standards, said Jimmy Christianson, an attorney with the Associated General Contractors.

A recent draft of an upcoming report from scientists representing 13 federal agencies say sea levels along U.S. coastlines could rise by more than one foot on average by 2050, potentially more in the Northeast and western Gulf of Mexico. A projected increase in the intensity of hurricanes in the North Atlantic will increase the probability of "extreme coastal flooding."

Environmentalists said Tuesday that ignoring the reality of the Earth's changing climate is shortsighted.

"What this order will do is ensure that we will waste more taxpayer money because federal agencies will no longer have to consider long-term flood risks to federally funded infrastructure projects," said Jessica Grannis, who manages the adaptation program at the Georgetown Climate Center.

The president, speaking at a news conference at Trump Tower in New York, said it can cost hundreds of millions of dollars and 17 years to approve an ordinary highway project because of burdensome regulations. Under Trump's order, agencies must complete environmental reviews of projects within two years on average. Trump signed another executive order on streamlining environmental and public reviews of infrastructure projects his first week in office.

"We used to have the greatest infrastructure anywhere in the world. And today we're like a third-world country," Trump said, using a term referring to the economically developing nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

HOPPY: Grasshoppers have a lifespan of a few months to a year

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weeds out of the field," said Hales, grinning. "I filled a Gatorade cap full of water."

Hales, who graduated this past winter with a degree in agriculture business management from Oregon State University, came home to farm in January. His family farms more than 4,000 acres around Helix and Adams.

Hales' high-tech harvester is a smart programmable machine capable of traveling in a precise pattern at a steady speed with only a modicum of human intervention. The operator often has little to do.

Maybe that's why Hales started researching grasshoppers on his smart phone. He learned that the insects don't actually drink water, they get their moisture solely from vegetation. He discovered that grasshoppers eat a variety of plant species and have a lifespan of a few months to a year.

Somewhere along the way, Hales gave his new cabmate a name — Sir Hoppy Legs, Sir Hoppy for short. People in Hales' life got interested, too. On day nine, Hales texted his stepfather, Carl Culham, about the crazy grasshopper in his combine and Culham was intrigued.

"I'd text him and ask 'How's he doing?' and Jake would text back, 'He's still alive' and send a picture," Culham said. Soon Hales sent updates with no prodding.

Hales said his stepmother, JoAnna Hales, packs lunch each day for the harvest crew. Lately, she has taken to packing a small bag of lettuce for Sir Hoppy.

Hales often jumps out of the cab and leaves the door wide open. One day, the door stood open about half the day. Sir Hoppy, so far, has stayed put.

Sir Hoppy is the quiet type, downright introverted.

The grasshopper stays low-key when Hales is in the combine, except for one day when he jumped onto Hales' knee. When Hales leaves the cab, however, Sir Hoppy goes into party mode.

"I'll come back and find him on the ceiling or the side window," Hales said.

Last weekend, when the combine broke down, Hales restocked Sir Hoppy's greens and periodically opened the doors so the hopper wouldn't overheat.

Harvesting will be done in a day so Hales is hoping for a *hoppy* ending to his collaboration with his grasshopper buddy. Someone suggested putting him in a terrarium, but Hales said he will return Sir Hoppy to the field where they first met.

"I think he wants to be back in the wild," Hales said.

Contact Kathy Aney at kaney@eastoregonian.com or call 541-966-0810.

RED CROSS: 90 percent of the workforce is volunteer

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McCall said. "It was, 'If you need something, call us.'"

The Red Cross's disaster action team sends trained volunteers to respond to fires that destroy residences, providing victims with crucial comfort and support when they need it most. But with fire season in full swing, Umatilla County's action team is low on volunteers and relying on support from nearby counties. They're asking more local residents to step up to ensure no victims are left without care.

Alaina Mayfield, the Red Cross' Disaster Program Manager for the Cascades Region, said there are roughly six Red Cross volunteers in Umatilla County. Volunteers are placed in teams of two or three for fire responses. But because they're volunteers, they can always turn down assignments if, say, they're out of town. That happens quite often during the summer.

It doesn't mean that victims are left completely without care. "I wouldn't say the needs aren't being met. People are getting Red Cross services," Mayfield said. "But we always need more volunteers. It makes for a faster response if they're nearby."

Heather Stanhope, a disaster action team volunteer who lives in La Grande, said she had to respond to Umatilla County fires four times within a two-week span in late July. She and her disaster team partner drove an hour or more to scenes in Hermiston, Pendleton, Milton-Freewater and

Umatilla.

While summer is the busiest time for fire relief, local volunteers are just as important in the winter, when icy conditions makes it difficult for responders to drive significant distances.

First-day response is important for more than relief supplies. Victims can often use a little compassion.

"It was just nice to have a friendly face and someone acknowledging you've been through a disaster," said Joy Goubeaud, whose RV caught fire during a quick stop in Pendleton on July 21. She and her husband were left stranded. "We were in this place where we knew nobody — not one human being. I was very grateful they came."

After the fire, the Goubeauds first called their insurance company, who said only that they'd get back to them on Monday. The Red Cross responders not only provided the Goubeauds the means to get through the weekend, but called their insurance company to "light a fire under them," Goubeaud said.

Still, the company didn't come out to assess the damage until six days later, showing little concern for the couple's makeshift living conditions. They'd taken up residence in an empty asphalt lot, laying out their possessions around the defunct RV. Unlike the insurance professionals, the Red Cross volunteers visited multiple times in person.

They continue to provide follow-up phone calls three weeks later. While it's often just the little things they

provide, "it's tremendous what the Red Cross does," Goubeaud said.

Over 90 percent of the Red Cross workforce is volunteer, according to the organization's website. Many volunteers serve multiple roles within the organization's mission of providing humanitarian aid.

"My favorite question to ask is 'What do you like to do?'" Mayfield said. "We have a need to fill based on what your skills are."

In addition to disaster relief, the local organization coordinates blood drives, installs smoke detectors and educates the public on emergency preparedness. They'll have a major presence during the Aug. 21 eclipse by partnering with local fire and police departments. Mayfield said she's not worried about the number of volunteers for events like the eclipse, when she can plan ahead.

But the unexpected fire responses are a little trickier. According to Stanhope, Umatilla County has a few volunteer trainees who can't yet navigate a fire response alone. The Red Cross asks each volunteer to complete online training courses to ensure they're prepared to meet the needs of victims. Volunteers can navigate those courses at their own pace, and there's options for further training, free of charge, if it sparks interest.

To learn more about volunteer opportunities, visit www.redcross.org/ volunteer.

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HOUSING: Another development also received council attention

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local improvement district.

The city still owes \$759,287 to Banner Bank on the local improvement district and isn't set to finish paying off the debt until 2025. Staff will use the proceeds from the sale to Pace and \$162,000 in refunded money from a community development block grant to cover the costs.

Before voting on the deal, the council met behind closed doors to discuss the transaction. When they re-emerged, they unanimously approved the deal. The council also approved a separate motion from City Councilor Scott Fairley to use money from the block grant refund to cover the system development charges that were waived.

Public Works Director Bob Patterson, who was also the acting city manager with Robb Corbett on vacation, said the system development charges go toward parks and transportation and would generate \$1,400 to \$1,500 per house.

A separate Tutuilla housing development the city is involved in also received council attention.

The council unanimously voted to move \$120,000 in liens the city had on Pendleton Heights townhouses to a later phase of the development.

The city placed \$320,000 in liens on the townhouses to help cover



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Unfinished homes are nearing completion in the Sunridge housing development on Tuesday in Pendleton.

\$1.3 million in infrastructure improvements, which Pendleton Heights developer Saj Jivanjee was originally supposed to pay once they were completed.

As a part of the deal, Jivanjee agreed to pay the city \$200,000 now and will pay the other \$120,000 when he completes a planned 100-unit apartment complex on the property.

Other council action included:

- The council authorized staff to spend an additional \$281,417 with engineering firm Murraysmith to provide pre-planning work for projects related to the city's utility master plans. The authorization brings the total amount the city's spent with Murraysmith to \$1.1 million.

The council voted 7-1 to authorize the expenditure, with Councilor Becky Marks voting against. Marks called the proposals "complicated," "not clear,"

and suggested they were too expensive.

- The council unanimously approved a resolution to proceed with alternative method of building the new fire station funded by a \$10 million bond.

Instead of bidding the project out after the design process is done, the city will solicit a contractor during the design process. City staff expect this method to result in a lower cost for the fire station.

- As the Pendleton Development Commission, the council unanimously approved a \$23,532 Jump Start loan to Oregon Grain Growers Brand Distillery. Oregon Grain Growers will use the money to finance half the cost of installing fire suppression sprinklers in the restaurant it plans to open in September.

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ECLIPSE: By no means should people use sunglasses or welder's goggles

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should be careful to check beforehand.

"If you can put on the glasses and you can see, they're probably phony," he said.

Drotzmann said that by no means should people use sunglasses or welder's goggles to view the eclipse, as doing so can damage vision.

He said he and his staff had sold about 300 glasses from their office and had run out of their supply. They plan to watch the eclipse, too.

"We'll take a break from our work schedules, put our glasses on, and go out and watch," he said.

Travel Safety

The crowds this weekend are expected to be overwhelming, and travelers are advised to plan ahead and be prepared for many hours on the road in slow-moving traffic.

The American Red Cross recommends that people keep several emergency items in their vehicles, such as bottled water, non-perishable food, a flashlight, cell phone chargers, batteries and a battery-powered radio. They also recommend keeping a first-aid kit, necessary medications, personal hygiene items, blankets and jumper cables in the vehicle. Travelers are encouraged to keep cash, an emergency map of the area in which they'll be viewing the eclipse, and emergency contact information written on a card in the vehicle.

Fire Prevention

Oregon has already experienced a spate of wildfires this summer, and the crowds coming for the eclipse will put the state at extra risk. Most state parks are already under fire restriction, but Oregon State Parks will be under an open flame/fire restriction beginning August 16. The ban is temporary, but geared toward creating new problems for the already busy fire crews.

Charcoal briquettes, tiki-style torches, candles and campfires or anything with an open flame are all prohibited. Only sources that can be turned off instantly will be



AP Photo/Dita Alangkara

In this March 2016 file photo, people wearing protective glasses look up at the sun to watch a solar eclipse in Jakarta, Indonesia.

allowed, like propane stoves and propane fire pits.

Additionally, the Governor's Office urged viewers to be careful about extinguishing cigarettes and parking on dry grass, which could spark a fire. Drivers should carry a fire extinguisher, a shovel, and water in their vehicles in case they need to extinguish a fire.

Several organizations, both local and statewide, are preparing for the event as they would any emergency.

The Red Cross will work with local emergency agencies, and prepare with cots, blankets and water. They will also have volunteers and resources available to help people in distress, if necessary. If communication channels are compromised, the Red Cross plans to use ham radio or emergency cell channels.

The Umatilla County Emergency Management Department is treating the event as an opportunity to prepare for a major emergency, such as the Cascadia earthquake. In that situation, an influx of people from the west side of the state would be coming to Eastern Oregon, so the county will be using the event as a way to learn about how it can best deal with those large crowds.

McKay Creek Estates

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EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR SERIES

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"Be The Best Caregiver & Feel Fantastic Doing It"

Although this book hasn't been written, we understand the caregiver journey can be stressful and challenging. Our aim is to provide some clarity and support to caregivers helping seniors. Finding the right information enables compassionate support and advocacy for a friend or loved one.

You are invited to attend a FREE monthly educational series featuring experts and professionals who provide support to families and who are advocates for seniors and their care.

Thursday, May 18th at 2:00 p.m.

Brain Fitness for Seniors

Brain exercises are important to keep the mind sharp.

It is important to encourage memory exercises when you are a senior caregiver. Asking your loved one to share a favorite memory or stories about their lives can bring them joy, strengthen their memory and increase their brain function. Learn about a variety of techniques you can use to encourage brain fitness.

Thursday, July 20th at 2:00 p.m.

Senior Finances, How to Help

Employ strategies to protect the finances of your loved ones.

As our parents and loved ones age they may lose the ability to fully track their finances. When seniors are unable to manage their daily finances they may become susceptible to financial abuse, lose their home or risk having their utilities turned off. Learn how you can make arrangements for financial assistance to protect your loved one.

Thursday, June 15th at 2:00 p.m.

Managing Chronic Conditions

Self-management support provides tools to improve health.

In the U.S., statistics reveal that one in four seniors over the age of 65 are challenged with managing one or more chronic medical conditions. Self-management support tools can help you and your loved one better understand how to manage their illness day-to-day and encourage them to take an active role in their health care.

Thursday, August 17th at 2:00 p.m.

Effectively Manage Chronic Pain

Pain management is a crucial component to caring for seniors.

As a caregiver, it can be difficult to know how to help a senior minimize and manage chronic pain. Older adults often encounter chronic pain as their muscles and joints become stiff and they become less agile. We'll provide tips to understand the various medications used to treat pain and potential side effects.

Location: Classes are held at St. Anthony Hospital, conference room #1: 2801 St. Anthony Way, Pendleton, OR 97801

Call us at (541) 276-1987 for more information or to reserve your seat(s). Hurry space is limited. Refreshments provided.

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