

New bill in Senate aims to thin forests, stem wildfires

By **ANDREW SELSKY**
Associated Press

SALEM — After a summer wildfire season that blanketed much of the West in smoke, U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley introduced a bill Wednesday that would reduce the severity of wildfire by thinning forests that are crowded with too many trees and have become fuel for megafires.

The bill would create a \$1 billion fund to allow the Forest Service to increase the pace and scale of wildfire reduction projects, empower federal agencies to work with local communities to plan and prepare for wildfires, and permanently reauthorize a collaborative forest restoration program that brings stakeholders together to thin forests.

“I’m hoping it’ll become

a bipartisan vision. Everybody who pays any attention to the forest sees these benefits,” Merkley said, speaking from Washington in a conference call with reporters.

As an example of how thinning can save communities, the Oregon Democrat cited a fire that was ignited by lightning one August afternoon in 2017 near the Oregon tourist town of Sisters. It spread fast. Residents in outlying areas fled as flames marched toward their homes.

Just a few months earlier, the U.S. Forest Service and a group of locals representing forest stakeholders arranged to thin part of the overgrown forest, creating a buffer zone around Sisters.

That effort saved homes, and perhaps the community of 2,500, by slowing the fire’s progress and allowing fire-



In this Sept. 5, 2017 photo, the Eagle Creek wildfire burns on the Oregon side of the Columbia River Gorge near Cascade Locks.

fighters to corral the blaze.

The work was done by the Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project, composed of loggers, environmentalists, local officials, recreation outfitters and others. It was one of 23 projects in the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration program, created in 2009 by Congress and that Merkley seeks permanent support for.

His bill would allow more projects to receive funding in a given fiscal year.

“It’s way past time to do a lot more on the front end to make our forests more fire resilient,” Merkley said.

He hopes the Senate will take up the bill after the November elections.

Last year, 71,500 wildfires burned 10 million acres nationwide, the second-largest figure on record.

Violent crime rose in Oregon in 2017

BEND (AP) — Violent crime rose in Oregon in 2017 despite a slight nationwide decrease in violent crimes and property crimes.

The Bulletin reported Wednesday that FBI statistics show Oregon experienced a more than 6 per-

cent jump in violent crimes. Nationwide, murders decreased 0.7 percent in 2017, and robberies, by 4 percent.

Burglaries decreased 7.6 percent and larceny thefts decreased 2.2 percent.

But Oregon saw a 6.3 percent jump in violent crime in 2017.

There were 104 murders in Oregon reported to

the FBI in 2017, compared with 116 in 2016.

There were 1,999 rapes reported, compared with 1,784 in 2016.

A vast majority of reported crimes happened in urban areas.

The FBI collects the information from local, state, federal and tribal law enforcement agencies, and releases it annually.

Sen. Merkley files suit to obtain Kavanaugh papers, delay vote

By **ANDREW SELSKY**
Associated Press

SALEM — An Oregon senator filed suit Wednesday in federal court in the District of Columbia, charging that Trump administration violated the Constitution’s separation of powers by withholding from the Senate 100,000 pages of documents on Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh.

Sen. Jeff Merkley, a Democrat, is asking the federal court to order the administration to produce the papers and to delay confirmation hearings until senators can digest them.

“This is an unacceptable violation of separation of powers and I’m standing up and filing this case to say, ‘this must end,’” Merkley told reporters in a conference call from the nation’s capital. “And we’re seeking the court to intervene and give senators access to the nominee’s record.”



Merkley

Kavanaugh’s nomination has become more controversial after three women claimed he had engaged in sexual misconduct in the 1980s when he was in high school and college.

Merkley said the women are being treated horribly, even worse than Anita Hill who testified in Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas’ confirmation hearings in 1991, because no investigation is being carried out.

“The Senate judiciary committee is turning this into a ‘he said-she said’ presentation,” Merkley said.

Asked during a conference call with reporters if he expects his lawsuit to have any effect, Merkley responded: “This is completely untested territory.”

“I certainly would like to see an injunc-

tion that would tell the president to desist in the undocumented unjustified use of so-called presidential or executive privilege to block the senate from having access to documents,” he said.

As far as anyone can tell, a president has never acted so extensively to block the ability of the Senate to review the record of a nominee, so a court has never had to weigh in on such a situation, he said.

Courts generally defer to procedures of the Senate, but in this case the procedures “are being profoundly compromised by a violation of separation of powers,” said Merkley.

He has also taken on President Donald Trump for his “zero tolerance” immigration policy that saw immigrant parents separated from their children.

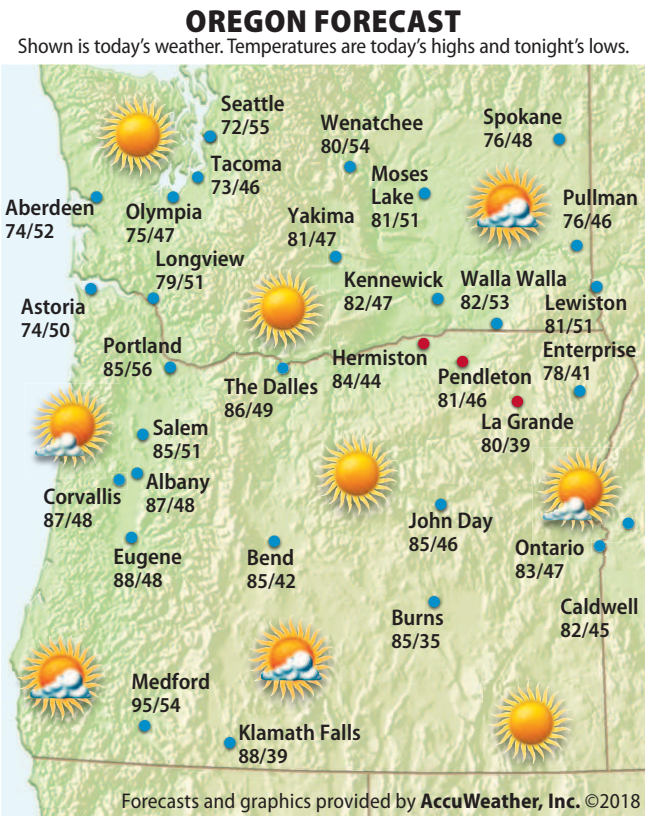
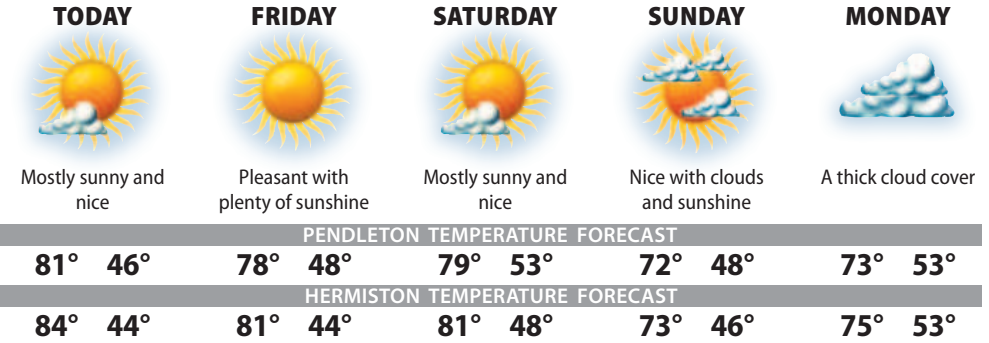
Records from when Kavanaugh worked in the George W. Bush White House as legal counsel, and then as staff secretary are at the center of the dispute. The Trump administration says disclosing records from his tenure as legal counsel would disrupt the functions or decision-making processes of the executive branch.

Merkley said when a president asserts executive privilege, it’s normally done on a very small number of documents with a log that lays out the justification for each piece.

“In this case there is no log ... there is no explanation. It is a wholesale censorship of relevant documentation being done at the direction of the president of the United States of America,” he said.

The lawsuit names Trump, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley and others.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.

EMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	77°	40°
Normals	73°	46°
Records	94° (1899)	24° (1908)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.00"
Normal month to date	0.46"
Year to date	6.52"
Last year to date	12.28"
Normal year to date	8.84"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

EMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	79°	38°
Normals	75°	44°
Records	98° (1952)	32° (2000)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	Trace
Normal month to date	0.37"
Year to date	5.15"
Last year to date	7.01"
Normal year to date	6.49"

WINDS (in mph)

	Today	Fri.
Boardman	NE 4-8	NNE 4-8
Pendleton	N 4-8	NW 4-8

SUN AND MOON

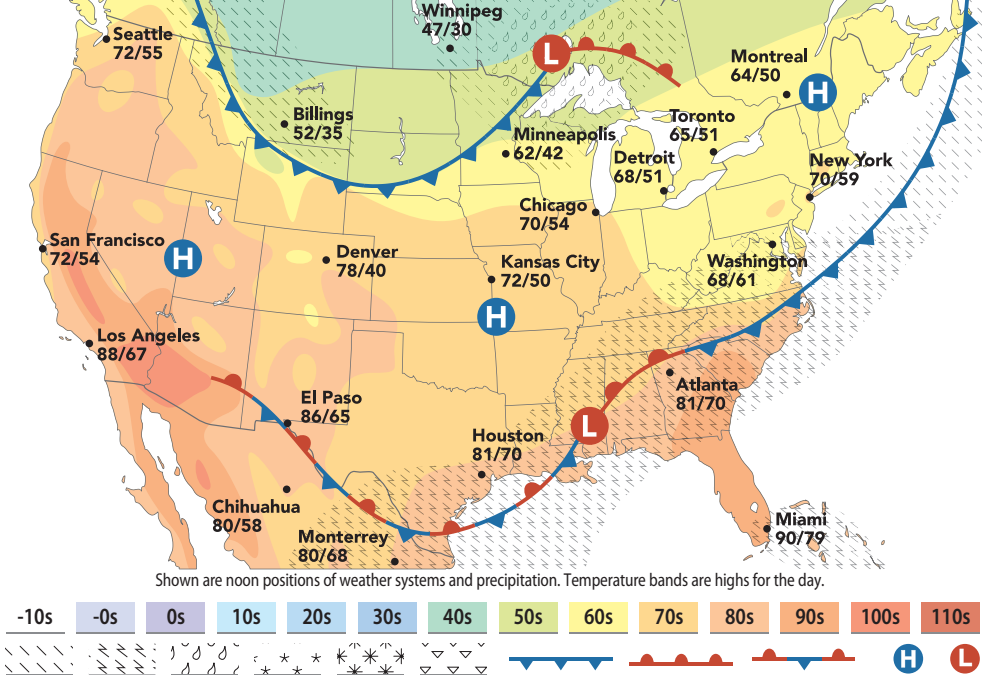
Sunrise today	6:48 a.m.
Sunset tonight	6:43 p.m.
Moonrise today	8:26 p.m.
Moonsset today	9:21 a.m.

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 108° in Thermal, Calif. Low 12° in Stanley, Idaho

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Police: Body found in car trunk ‘likely’ missing woman, 89

By **GILLIAN FLACCUS**
Associated Press

PORTLAND — A body found in the trunk of a car during a traffic stop likely belongs to an 89-year-old woman who has been missing for a week, and a convicted sex offender who was driving the car has been arrested on a murder charge, the Portland Police Bureau said Wednesday.

The Oregon Medical Examiner’s Office is conducting a confirmation of the body’s identity and has determined the person died of homicidal violence, Portland police Sgt. Christopher Burley said.

The car’s driver, 58-year-old Timothy J. Mackley, was arrested Tuesday and is being held without bail pending a first court appearance Wednesday. Court documents do not list an attorney for Mackley and it wasn’t clear if he had one.

Marcine Herinck was reported missing on Sept. 19 from her home in northeast Portland, where she lived independently despite some memory issues, police have said.

Her purse was found on the kitchen floor, a cup of coffee was in the microwave, her garage and front doors were open, and the clothes she wore the night before were on her bed the day she disappeared, KGW-TV has reported, citing a family account.



Mackley

Search and rescue crews spent days looking for her — making repeated pleas to the public for tips — until police on Monday developed new information that suggested foul play and pointed them in Mackley’s direction, Burley said in a statement.

Based on that information, police stopped Mackley’s car on and found the body, he said.

No additional details were released, and Burley did not return a call seeking further comment.

Mackley is a convicted sex offender who pleaded guilty to sexual abuse and sodomy in Multnomah County in 1988, Multnomah County court records show.

He was arrested in 2019 for failing to register as a sex offender, those records show.

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