

Portland will seek tolls on I-5, I-205

By **PARIS ACHEN**
Capital Bureau

The Oregon Transportation Commission voted unanimously Thursday to seek federal approval to toll two segments of Portland's longest and most-used freeways, but motorists wouldn't see such tolls for years.

The state is applying to collect tolls on all lanes along seven miles of Interstate 5 through the center of Portland and all lanes of Interstate 205 as motorists cross the Abernethy Bridge between Oregon City and West Linn.

"I really want to make sure folks understand that this is going to be a process that is going to be years," said Tammy Baney, transportation commission chair. "For some ... that is not fast enough, it's not aggressive enough, and it won't meet the need, but for some, it may be too fast, too aggressive, and there still are concerns."

Officials said the tolls are intended to pay for road projects that expand capacity while encouraging commuters to use

other transportation.

Transportation commissioners acknowledged that the tolls would affect low-income drivers and say they are considering ways to mitigate the cost through more transit options and subsidies.

"People are concerned they are going to wake up tomorrow, and all of a sudden, the roads are going to have a cost to them to be able to get to work," Baney said. "We don't have the transit options that would make it convenient and reliable for individuals to be able to get off the (single-occupancy vehicle) system. We know that. There is the concern also about diversion into communities and what that might mean, too. This commission takes it very seriously that those questions are still out there and need to be answered."

The triangle of freeways around Portland — Interstates 5, 205 and 84 — are the heaviest traveled roads in the Portland area. Traffic volumes on those freeways hover around 150,000 vehicles per day, according to the Oregon Department of Transportation.

Senate passes bill making it easier to kill sea lions

By **PHUONG LE**
Associated Press

SEATTLE — A bill that would make it easier to kill sea lions that feast on imperiled salmon in the Columbia River has cleared the U.S. Senate.

State wildlife managers say rebounding numbers of sea lions are eating more salmon than ever and their appetites are undermining billions of dollars of investments to restore endangered fish runs.

Senate Bill 3119, which passed Thursday by unanimous consent, would streamline the process for Washington, Idaho, Oregon and several Pacific Northwest Native American tribes to capture and euthanize potentially hundreds of sea lions found in the river east of Portland, Oregon.

Sen. Jim Risch, an Idaho Republican who co-sponsored the bill with senators from all three states, said the legislation would help ensure healthy populations of salmon for years to come.

"As endangered salmon face extinction, we must take steps to protect them," Sen. Maria Cantwell, a



AP Photo/Don Ryan, File

A bill making it easier to kill sea lions that feast on imperiled salmon in the Columbia River has cleared the U.S. Senate.

Washington Democrat, said in a statement.

The Senate bill is similar to one passed by the U.S. House in June and sponsored by Reps. Jaime Herrera Beutler, a Washington Republican, Kurt Schrader, another Oregon Democrat, and others.

The House will have to consider the Senate's bill, or vice versa, before it heads to President Donald Trump for consideration. "We have reason to believe they will by the end of the year," said Kaylin Minton, communications director for Risch.

"This bill changes the core protective nature of the Marine Mammal Protection Act by allowing for the indiscriminate killing of sea lions throughout the Columbia River and its tributaries," Naomi Rose, marine mammal scientist for Animal Welfare Institute, said in a statement.

Washington, Idaho and Oregon wildlife managers currently have federal authorization to kill problem sea lions that eat salmon in the Columbia River near Bonneville Dam east of Portland.

But they must first go through a lengthy process to identify and document specific sea lions that cause problems, including observing them eating a salmon and using non-lethal hazing measures on them.

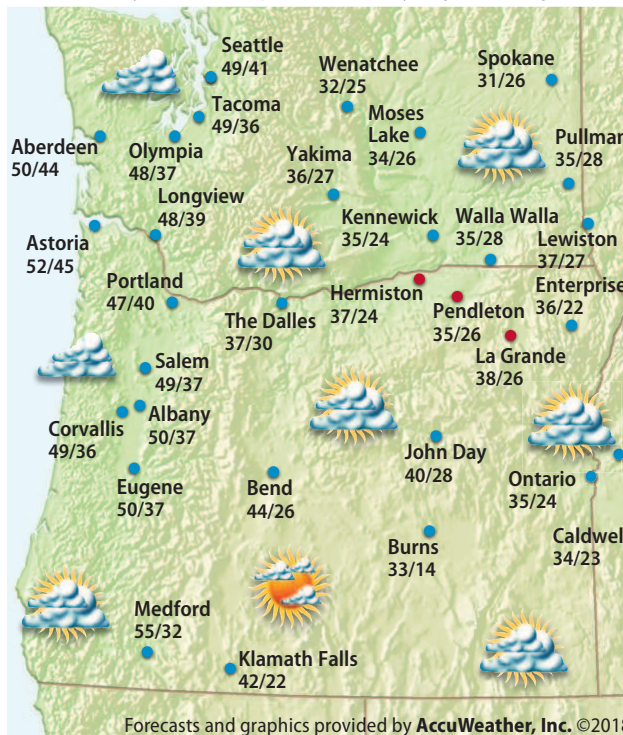
Both the House and Senate bills would remove those requirements, so states and several Native American tribes could get a federal permit to remove any sea lion east of the Interstate 205 bridge that connects Vancouver with Portland, as well as in tributaries of the Columbia River where there are federally protected fish.

Forecast for Pendleton Area

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Mostly cloudy and chilly	Mostly cloudy and chilly	A bit of snow and rain	A little afternoon snow	A passing afternoon shower
PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
35° 26°	39° 31°	43° 29°	45° 36°	44° 29°
HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
37° 24°	37° 30°	45° 27°	40° 36°	49° 31°

OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



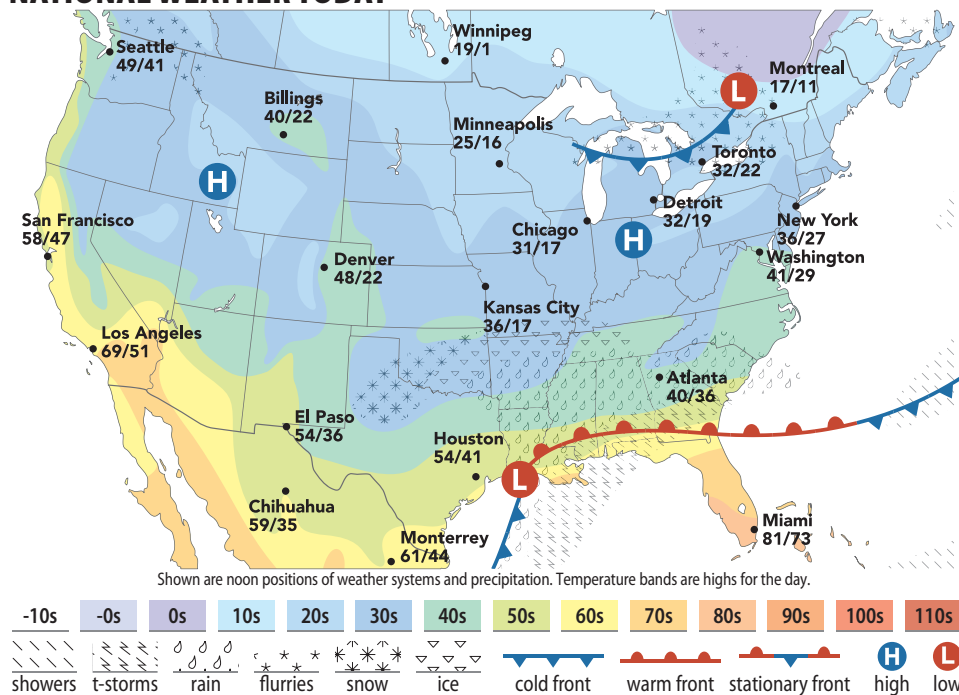
ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	28°	24°
Normals	40°	27°
Records	64° (1938)	-7° (1972)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	0.01"	
Normal month to date	0.32"	
Year to date	8.88"	
Last year to date	15.33"	
Normal year to date	11.79"	
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	33°	29°
Normals	41°	28°
Records	68° (1938)	-7° (2013)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	0.01"	
Normal month to date	0.37"	
Year to date	6.97"	
Last year to date	8.77"	
Normal year to date	8.84"	
WINDS (in mph)		
Today	Sun.	
Boardman	NE 3-6	NNE 3-6
Pendleton	NNE 4-8	NE 4-8
SUN AND MOON		
Sunrise today	7:23 a.m.	
Sunset tonight	4:11 p.m.	
Moonrise today	8:29 a.m.	
Moonset today	5:38 p.m.	

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 84° in Brownsville, Texas Low -24° in Stanley, Idaho

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Oregon water year off to slow start

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
EO Media Group

Just two months into the new water year, Oregon is already lagging behind in precipitation and snowpack across much of the state, deepening concerns about another difficult drought year in 2019.

The Oregon Water Resources Department released its latest water conditions report Dec. 3, showing average temperatures for the month of November were 2 to 5 degrees above normal in most of western and northeast Oregon. Precipitation was also well below normal statewide, as much as 1 to 3 inches in parts of northeast and northwest Oregon.

Racquel Rancier, senior policy coordinator for the OWRD, said it is still too early to make predictions about water conditions next year, though soil moisture, stream flows and mountain snowpack are all lower than usual out of the starting gate.

"If temperatures continue to be warmer than normal and we don't get a good snowpack, and if precipitation is low, we could be heading into a difficult drought year for 2019," Rancier said.

Long-term forecasts are not calling for much relief. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Prediction Center calculates the odds of El Niño at more than 80 percent through February, which typically means mild winter weather in store for the Pacific Northwest.

"This is concerning, as this could result in less precipitation fall as snow," Rancier said. "If the forecast is correct, we could see a continuation of drought conditions."

Snowpack is critical for farmers, ranchers and fisheries in the West, because it acts as a natural reservoir for water to gradually replenish streams and reservoirs into summer. So far, water basins in southern Oregon, includ-

ing the Klamath, Harney, Owyhee, Malheur and Lake County basins, are all experiencing average-to-above-average snow. The situation is more dire farther north, with the Willamette Basin currently at 51 percent of normal, and the Hood, Sandy and Lower Deschutes basins at 35 percent.

Average stream flows were about 50 percent of normal in November, including 30 percent of normal west of the Cascades. Rancier said many reservoirs also have little to no carryover water for next year, making precipitation all the more critical for irrigation supplies.

"This could make drought more challenging in 2019, as water in reservoirs in 2018 helped reduce drought impacts in 2018," she said.

Oregon remains mired in a statewide drought, with the U.S. Drought Monitor reporting more than half the state in "severe drought," and 34 percent in "extreme drought."

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