

Courtney, Boquist spar over claims of hostility, disrespect

By **CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE**
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Senate President Peter Courtney has directed a Republican state senator to “cease and desist” intimidating communications with other senators and legislative employees.

Courtney made the demand to state Sen. Brian Boquist, R-Dallas, in a Nov. 15 letter obtained by the Oregon Capital Bureau that cited “hostile, intimidating and harassing” communications.

Boquist denied the accusation and responded to Courtney this week in an email asking the Senate leader to apologize.

In an email to other Democratic senators on Dec. 10, Boquist blasted Courtney.

“I am sorry for the harshness of this email,” Boquist said, warning that he might move the Senate to censure Courtney.

The Senate is scheduled to meet in Salem on Friday. In an interview Wednesday, Boquist said he’s been trying for weeks to get details on how the Legis-

lature itself is preparing to comply with a new law that mandates pay equity. The law takes effect Jan. 1.

The Republican senator said he has sought public records and submitted questions to Courtney and other legislators on the issue.

Courtney had enough last month.

“Senator, in the recent past, you have communicated with members and staff in a way that creates a hostile and intimidating workplace,” Courtney wrote. “Your communications have belittled and harassed staff. You must immediately cease and desist communicating in this manner.”

Courtney’s office didn’t respond to a request for details on the conduct that triggered Courtney’s unusual rebuke.

Boquist has been known to send long and detailed emails to colleagues, sometimes copying reporters who cover the state legislature.

Boquist said that in September he received what he considered an inadequate response to his request for legislative documents relat-

ing to the pay equity matter. Under the new law, employers are required in certain circumstances to ensure employees are paid the same for the same work.

In October, Boquist said, he fired off 44 questions to Courtney and House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland. He received a response to the questions from Courtney’s chief of staff, Betsy Imholt.

“I asked a list of questions, I got a list of answers back that were frankly, non-answers and they were done in the name of Peter Courtney,” Boquist said Wednesday. “And he doesn’t like it when I called him out asking for factual answers.”

On Nov. 15, according to records obtained by the news bureau, Boquist wrote to Courtney’s staff chief, referring to her as “President Imholt” and terming her answers “nothing more than political blather.”

That same day, Imholt asked Boquist by email to be more respectful while Courtney issued his cease-and-desist demand.

Boquist has represented the mid-Willamette Valley in the Senate since 2009, and served in the House before that.



Sen. Brian Boquist



AP Photo/Ted S. Warren/

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee walks past a photo of an orca whale after he talked to reporters about his 2019-21 budget proposal on Thursday at the Capitol.

Washington governor proposes major steps for orca recovery

By **GENE JOHNSON**
Associated Press

SEATTLE — With scientists warning that the Northwest’s beloved killer whales are on the brink of extinction, Washington Gov. Jay Inslee announced dramatic plans Thursday to help the population recover — including \$1.1 billion in spending and a partial whale-watching ban.

“We are undertaking a Herculean effort to save these iconic creatures,” Inslee said in a prepared statement. “It will take action at every level of the environment across our entire state.”

Starved by a dearth of salmon, poisoned by contaminants, and buffeted by vessel noise that hinders their hunting and communication, the orcas that live in the waters between Washington state and Canada’s Vancouver Island have failed to reproduce successfully in the past three years. One grieving whale carried her dead calf on her head for 17 days last summer in an apparent effort to revive it.

There are 74 left in the population, the lowest number since the 1970s, when hundreds of orcas were captured in the region and more than 50 were kept for aquarium display.

Inslee, who is mulling a Democratic presidential run in 2020, detailed the plans as part of his announcement of his priorities for the 2019-2021 state budget. The money would go toward protecting and restoring habitat for salmon, espe-



AP Photo/Elaine Thompson, File

In this Jan. 18, 2014, file photo, an endangered female orca leaps from the water while breaching in Puget Sound.

cially chinook, the orcas’ favored prey; boosting production from salmon hatcheries; storm-water cleanup; and quieting vessel traffic.

Nearly \$300 million would go toward complying with a court order that requires the state to replace culverts that block the path of migrating salmon.

Money would also support developing plans to move or kill seals and sea lions that feast on Columbia River salmon where they get blocked by dams or other structures, and changing state water quality standards to allow more water to be spilled over dams, helping young salmon reach the ocean.

Inslee called for a new capital gains tax and an increase in business taxes to help cover the tab.

The governor also said he intends to ban commercial whale-watching of the local endangered orcas — known as the southern residents — for three years. He stressed that whale-watching will be allowed for other whales in Washington waters, including nonresident orcas that pass through, and that the state would undertake efforts to promote the industry to offset any lost business.

Inslee said he intended to permanently double the size of the “no-go zone” for vessels around orcas to 400 yards (365 meters) and create a “go slow zone” with reduced speed limits within a half-mile (926 meters). The Department of Fish and Wildlife would get \$1.1 million for public education and enforcement.

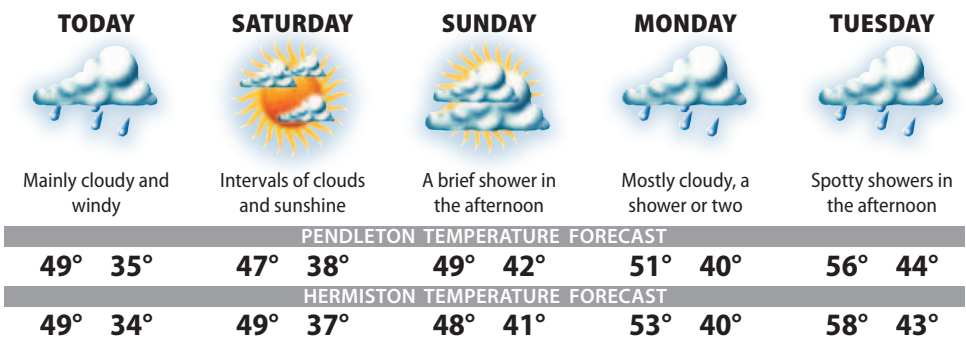
His plans call for converting two state ferries to quieter electric hybrids and building two others as hybrids.

The Arizona-based Center for Biological Diversity has sued the federal government for not doing more to protect the full range of the orcas along the West Coast. Catherine Kilduff, the group’s attorney, called Inslee’s plans to reduce vessel noise a good first step.

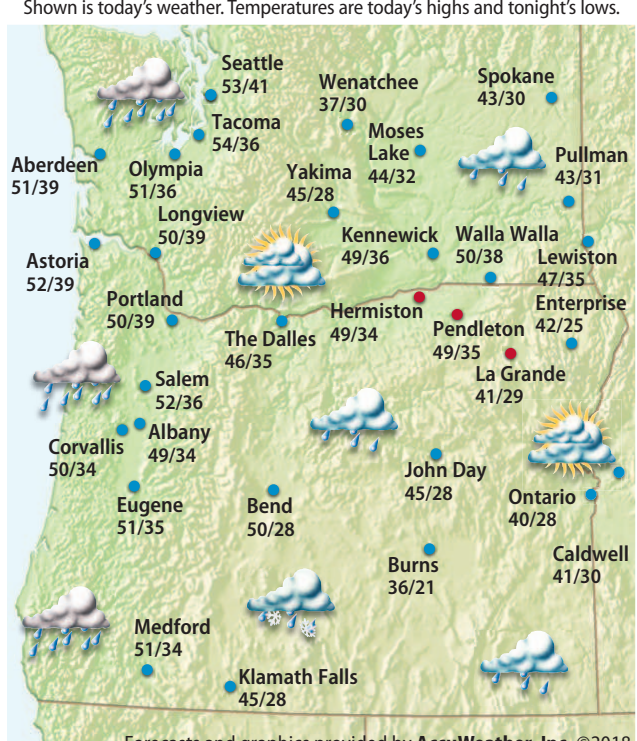
But, as other environmentalists have done, Kilduff stressed that removing four major dams along the Snake River is essential for the recovery of salmon — and thus for the whales.

A federal court has already ordered the government to consider breaching the dams.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST



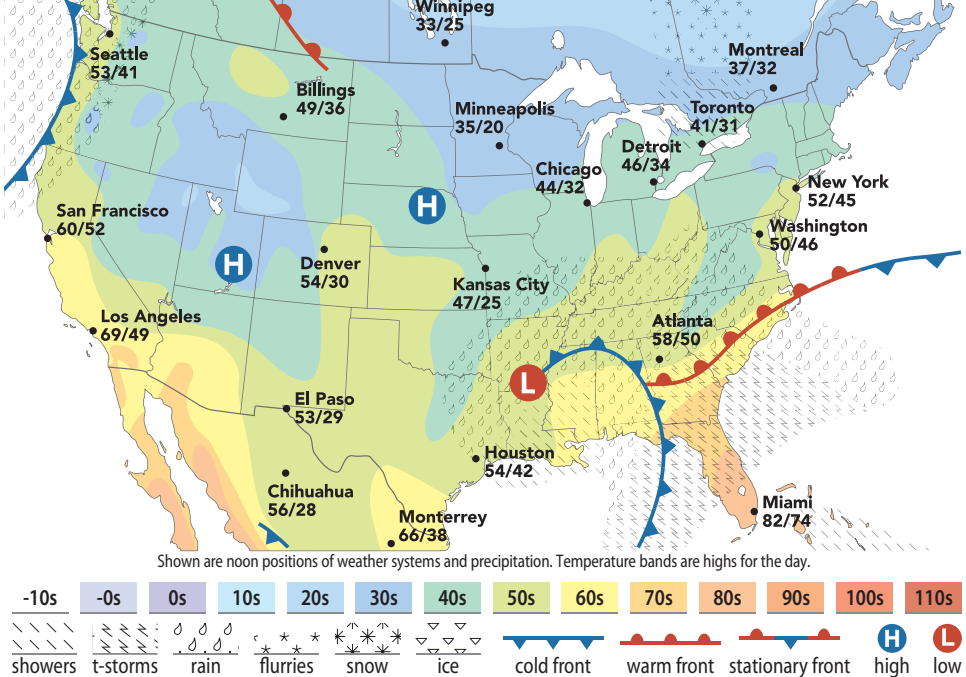
ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	57°	37°
Normals	39°	26°
Records	63° (1924)	-28° (1919)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	Trace	
Month to date	0.34"	
Normal month to date	0.60"	
Year to date	9.21"	
Last year to date	15.34"	
Normal year to date	12.07"	
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	51°	33°
Normals	39°	27°
Records	62° (1995)	-10° (1972)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	Trace	
Month to date	0.19"	
Normal month to date	0.67"	
Year to date	7.15"	
Last year to date	8.77"	
Normal year to date	9.14"	
WINDS (in mph)		
Today	Sat.	
Boardman	WSW 10-20	ENE 3-6
Pendleton	SSE 12-25	SE 4-8
SUN AND MOON		
Sunrise today	7:28 a.m.	
Sunset tonight	4:11 p.m.	
Moonrise today	12:13 p.m.	
Moonset today	11:23 p.m.	

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday’s National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 86° in McAllen, Texas Low -21° in Presque Isle, Maine

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Secretary of State Richardson gives update on brain cancer

SALEM (AP) — Oregon Secretary of State Dennis Richardson has released a video statement updating people on his treatment for a brain tumor.

Richardson had announced in June the presence of a “small, cancerous brain tumor.” Since then,

he said Thursday that the “three most recent” MRIs show the tumor has not grown.

The Statesman Journal reports Richardson said the “most challenging” effect of his treatment is its impact on his speech patterns.

Richardson has been

absent from public events.

The Secretary of State’s office hasn’t released the specific type of cancer or his prognosis.

Richardson, an attorney from southern Oregon, was elected in 2016 as Oregon’s first Republican secretary of state since 1985.

Hospital: St. Anthony ends hospice care

Continued from Page A1

Geller didn’t know how long St. Anthony had been offering hospice care, but he agreed that it had been a long-time service for the hospital.

The hospice used to be

housed in a separate facility on Southeast Court Avenue, but the service was eventually consolidated into the main hospital building when St. Anthony built the new hospital in 2013.

Cason’s Place, a non-

profit grief support center, now occupies the old hospice building.

The closest facilities for end-of-life care are now Good Shepherd Hospice in Hermiston and Walla Walla Community Hospice.

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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