

National wildlife refuge management under fire

SALEM (AP) — The federal government recently fended off attacks from all sides while defending its management of six national wildlife refuges against legal challenges from farmers and environmentalists.

The *Capital Press* reports the U.S. Interior Department is facing three lawsuits filed by three environmental groups who allege its plans for the 200,000-acre Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuge Complex along the Oregon-California border violates several federal laws.

A fourth complaint from six farms and agriculture groups alleges the agency has unlawfully exceeded its authority by restricting leases of refuge land for agricultural purposes.

The agricultural plaintiffs — Tulelake Irrigation District, Klamath Water Users Association, Tally Ho Farms Partnership, Four H Organics, Woodhouse Farming and Seed Co. and Tulelake Growers Association — claim a comprehensive conservation plan adopted in 2017 will substantially reduce acreage available for farming within the refuge complex.

Under the plan, certain new agricultural leases will

be subject to “special use permits” that include new requirements for “compatibility” between agriculture and waterfowl habitat.

These stipulations include flooding fields after harvest, limiting tillage in the autumn, prohibiting the planting of genetically engineered crops and disallowing the hazing of waterfowl during the first four months of the year.

According to the farm plaintiffs, these restrictions will render agriculture less productive and undermine its future viability in the area by reducing revenues and creating operational difficulties.

The Tule Lake and Lower Klamath national wildlife refuges were established with the purpose of leasing land for agriculture, which is worth about \$30 million in the two areas and supports about 600 jobs in the region, the complaint said.

Environmental groups suing over the management of the Klamath-area national wildlife refuges take aim at other aspects of the government’s plan: the amount of water allotted for waterfowl habitat, the continued use of pesticides and the impacts of grazing on federally protected species.

Washington governor pushes expanded health coverage

By SALLY HO
Associated Press

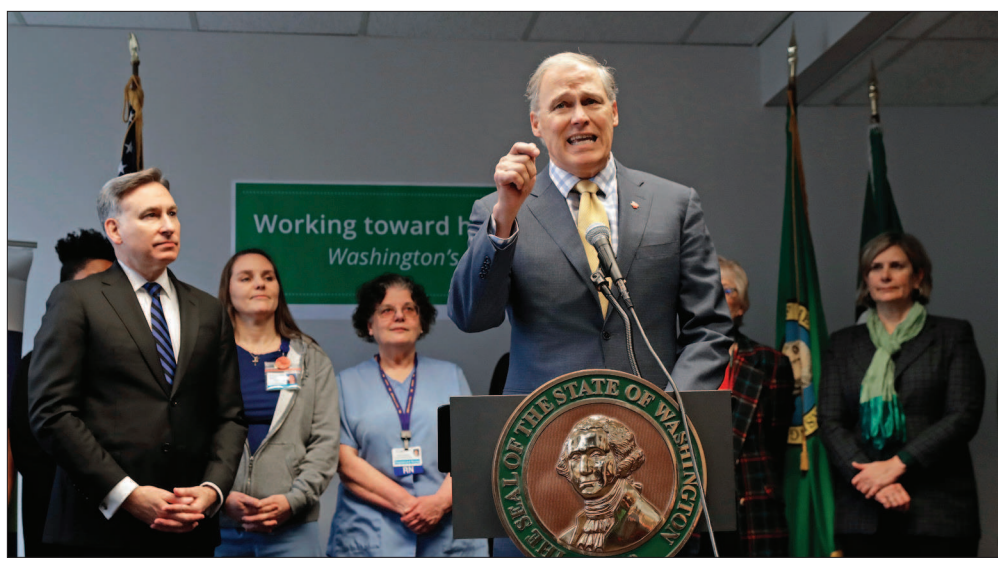
SEATTLE — Washington’s governor and New York City’s mayor unveiled major initiatives to expand health insurance coverage Tuesday, the latest moves by key Democratic leaders to address Trump administration health policies they say are keeping people from getting the care they need.

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, a likely presidential candidate, proposed a publicly run health insurance option for state residents who are not covered by private employers and buying insurance off the marketplace created under former President Barack Obama’s health care law.

“We need to write another chapter of health care reform,” said Inslee, who provided no details on how the program would be funded.

It came the same day New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, also considered a 2020 presidential contender, revealed a \$100 million-a-year plan to expand health care coverage to those who lack it, including immigrants in the U.S. illegally.

A day earlier, California Gov. Gavin Newsom proposed state-funded health



AP Photo/Ted S. Warren

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee speaks Tuesday at a news conference in Seattle.

care coverage for 138,000 young people living in the country illegally and reinstating a mandate for everyone to buy insurance or pay a fine — part of “Obamacare” that congressional Republicans eliminated last year.

The efforts in liberal strongholds target President Donald Trump’s push to roll back his predecessor’s signature law and are moves toward universal health care as championed by some Democrats. Health care was a top priority for voters in the November election, especially those who voted Democratic.

In Washington, Inslee included \$500,000 in his latest budget proposal to begin the work of setting up the statewide program known as Cascade Care. It aims to help lower-income people who don’t qualify for federal assistance get coverage by 2021.

The program would be administered by the Washington State Health Care Authority, the same agency in charge

of the state Medicaid system and the insurance program for state employees.

A measure expected in the legislative session that starts next week would direct the state agency to seek contract proposals from insurers. Inslee said reimbursement rates would be consistent with federal Medicare plans.

Washington Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler said President Donald Trump’s administration has put up “real roadblocks” to health care access and that if the state’s public option is approved, it wouldn’t need federal approval.

The Trump administration said in July that it would freeze payments under an “Obamacare” program that protects insurers with sicker patients from financial losses, which is expected to add to premium increases.

Inslee said 14 counties in Washington state are at risk of losing access to individual health insurance options. Rising costs are causing

some insurers to abandon the marketplace in largely rural counties.

The Economic Opportunity Institute said more than 43,000 people dropped their health insurance last year in Washington.

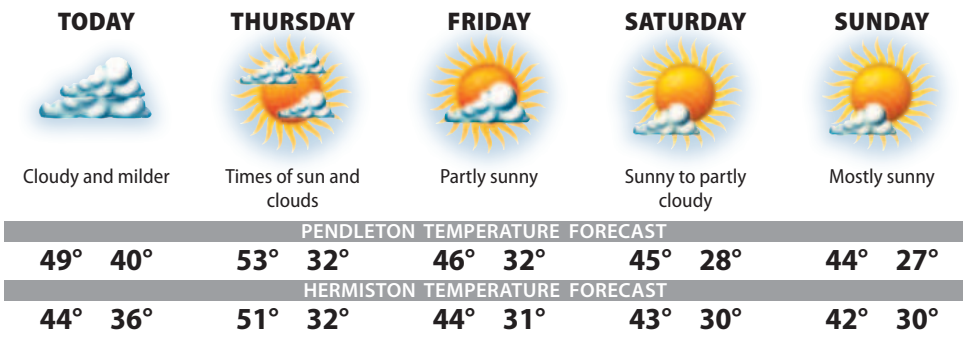
Officials aren’t committing state dollars to subsidizing Inslee’s program but suggesting that premiums paid by consumers will support it. Insurance carriers and health care providers who participate in the program will also likely be squeezed.

Washington previously had a version of this type of health coverage but it was eliminated during the Great Recession because it was heavily subsidized by the state.

State Rep. Joe Schmick, a Republican, expressed skepticism that Inslee’s proposal could deliver without more taxes or health insurance costs.

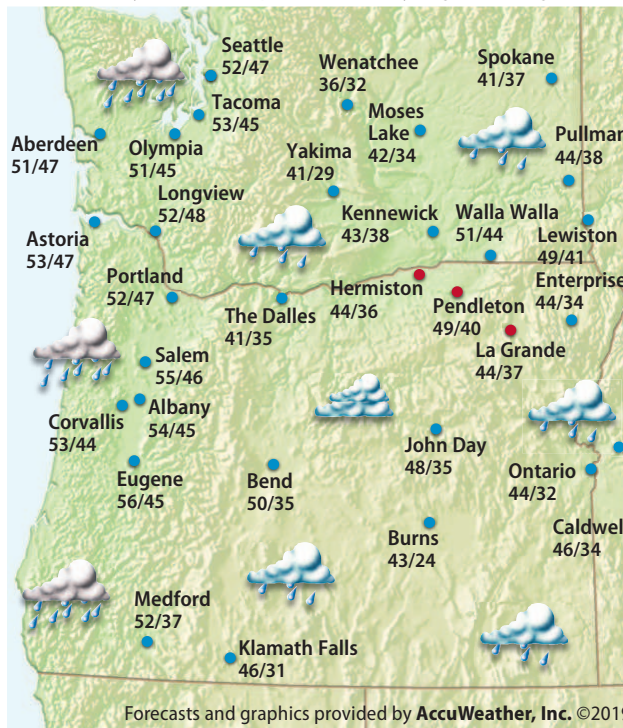
“Mark my words. This will cost people a lot more money, period.”

Forecast for Pendleton Area



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	37°	28°		
Normals	41°	27°		
Records	65° (1933)	-14° (1937)		
PRECIPITATION				
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.05"			
Month to date	0.09"			
Normal month to date	0.46"			
Year to date	0.09"			
Last year to date	0.17"			
Normal year to date	0.46"			
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.				
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW		
Yesterday	36°	31°		
Normals	40°	28°		
Records	65° (2002)	-20° (1937)		
PRECIPITATION				
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.03"			
Month to date	0.04"			
Normal month to date	0.32"			
Year to date	0.04"			
Last year to date	0.13"			
Normal year to date	0.32"			
WINDS (in mph)				
	Today	Thu.		
Boardman	NNE 4-8	W 3-6		
Pendleton	SSE 6-12	S 6-12		
SUN AND MOON				
Sunrise today	7:35 a.m.			
Sunset tonight	4:30 p.m.			
Moonrise today	9:50 a.m.			
Moonset today	8:11 p.m.			
	First	Full	Last	New
	Jan 13	Jan 20	Jan 27	Feb 4

BRIEFLY

State of Washington opposes federal nuclear waste proposal

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — The state of Washington said Tuesday it opposes a federal proposal to reclassify some radioactive waste on a site in the state that contains the nation’s largest supply because it fears much of the waste will be left in the ground.

The state this week filed its objections to a Trump administration plan to reclassify millions of gallons of waste stored in underground tanks at Hanford Nuclear Reservation. The objections were accompanied by a letter from Gov. Jay Inslee and Attorney General Bob Ferguson.

The U.S. Department of Energy is seeking to reclassify a large percentage of the waste as lower-level waste. That would allow treatment and disposal options that would not guarantee long-term protections.

“This dangerous idea will only serve to silence the voices of tribal leaders, Hanford workers, public safety officials, and surrounding communities in these important conversations,” said Inslee, a Democrat who is considering running for president in 2020. “This is unacceptable, and we will not stand by while this administration plans to abandon its responsibility to clean up their mess.”

Parks report presses for money for urban trails

SALEM (AP) — A new report by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department calls for more funding for hiking and walking trails in urban centers.

The *Statesman Journal* reports that

the agency says \$640 million is needed to create those trails for a population that’s getting older, more diverse and more urbanized.

The report is produced every five years to set policy and help cities and counties get grant money.

The department says the investment could save billions in health care costs because people are more likely to get outside and exercise when they have options close to home.

The report also examines how to bring recreation to low-income families that have traditionally been underserved.

Pesticide drift complaints for marijuana rare in Oregon

SALEM (AP) — Oregon agriculture regulators have investigated 11 complaints of pesticides used on nearby properties drifting onto marijuana and hemp farms.

The *Capital Press* reports that only two drift complaints of the 11 investigated by the Oregon Department of Agriculture have resulted in citations being issued for pesticide violations.

Sunny Summers, the department’s cannabis policy coordinator, says drift contamination appears to be a “minor thing.”

Since recreational marijuana was legalized in state in 2014, the department has investigated more than 250 cases in which routine tests have detected pesticide contamination of marijuana.

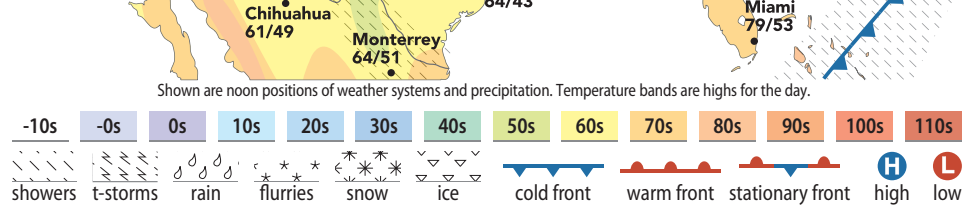
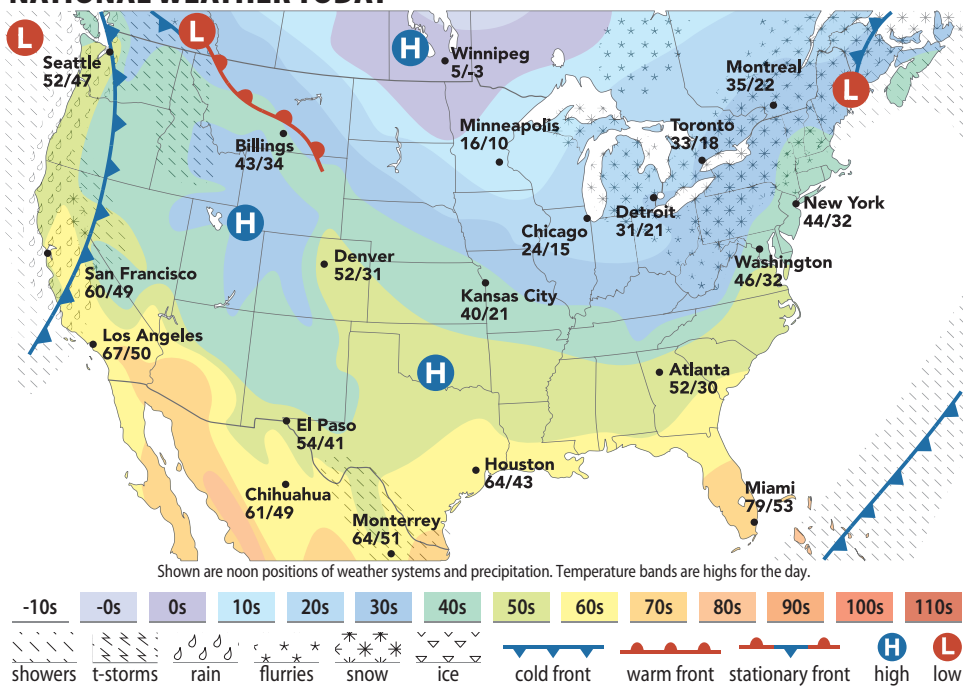
Under state law, marijuana cannot be sprayed with any pesticides registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for specific crops or subject to maximum residue levels.

NATIONAL EXTREMES

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

High 84° in Edinburg, Texas Low -22° in Daniel, Wyo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



The Jan. 8 article “Every drop counts” had incorrect information in a quote about blood donor demographics. Donors ages 16 to 24 made up 31 percent of the people who showed up to donate blood for the Red Cross in the last year.

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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