

# Disability rights group alarmed by Portland e-scooter rules

By GILLIAN FLACCUS  
Associated Press

PORTLAND — A disability rights nonprofit group in Oregon filed a letter of complaint Thursday with the city of Portland over new rules about an electric scooter pilot program.

In its letter, Disability Rights Oregon said Portland's decision to have residents file complaints about the ubiquitous e-scooters directly with the companies participating in the program instead of with the city reduces transparency and increases danger to the public.

Portland just began a second, yearlong phase of the pilot program intended to help the progressive city introduce the devices while avoiding pitfalls experienced by some other major U.S. metropolises.

It allows up to 2,500 of the devices on city streets from multiple companies as part of the "micro-mobility revolution" that's swept through major U.S. cities.

A four-month experiment with the e-scooters last year was successful but also generated 6,000 complaints and raised questions about pedestrian safety and the impact of the devices on public spaces like parks. The scooters also led to 176 vis-



A Lime e-scooter sits parked on a street in downtown Portland on Thursday.



Motorists ride on electric scooters along a street in downtown Portland on Thursday. A disability rights nonprofit group in Oregon filed a letter of complaint Thursday with the city of Portland over new rules about an electric scooter pilot program.

its to the emergency room or urgent care, the city said.

Electric scooters have surged in popularity in cities across the U.S. as a convenient, environmentally friendly mode of transportation for short trips that can otherwise be clogged with traffic. A report released last month by the National Association of City Transportation Officials said riders took 38.5 million trips on shared electric scooters in 2018, eclipsing the 36.5 million trips on shared, docked bicycles.

Last year, Portland resi-

dents could file complaints with the city about scooters. Now, the companies themselves are required to maintain complaint lines 24/7 and must report data to the city each month.

The information is reported with names and details stripped out, said Emily Cooper, the nonprofit's legal director, and companies have an incentive to downplay any serious issues.

"If someone was hurt or someone needs help, there's no way for the city to know that based on the way they

structured this agreement," she said. "The city shouldn't look at safety at arm's length."

Dylan Rivera, a spokesman for the city's Department of Transportation, did not immediately return a request for comment.

Brianna Orr, a transportation specialist with the city, said in an email to Disability Rights Oregon that the city wasn't able to respond quickly enough to complaints in the first phase of the pilot program. Now, for example, participating companies must respond to

abandoned scooters blocking sidewalks and curb ramps within 60 minutes, she said.

The city will audit response times of the companies and the monthly reports will be public record, Orr said in the email, which was shared with the AP by the nonprofit.

In famously progressive Portland, e-scooters are an important part of the city's drive to reduce traffic and encourage alternative modes of transportation, from light rail to bike commuting.

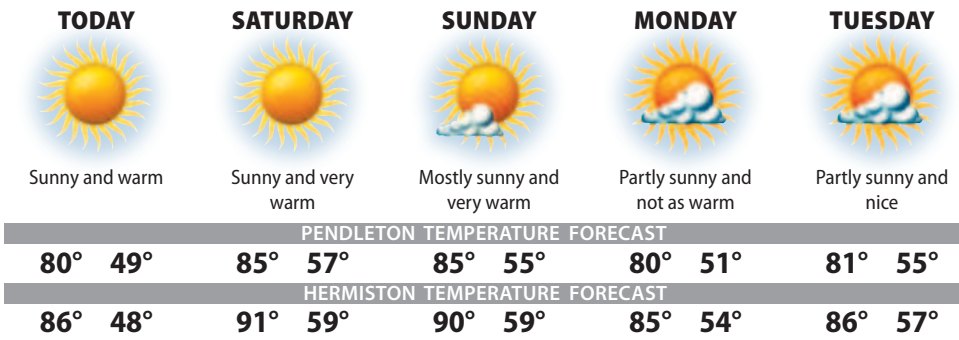
But like Portland, cities across the U.S. have

struggled to accommodate the devices while regulating safety and access for people in lower income neighborhoods.

San Francisco, for instance, kicked out Bird, Lime and Spin and instituted a competition for permits, ultimately awarding them to relative underdogs Scoot and Skip and capping the number of scooters that could be deployed.

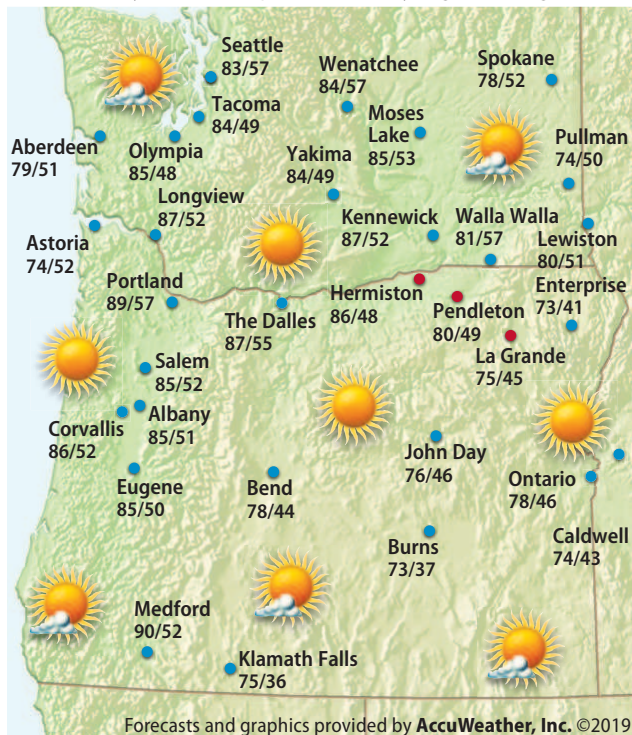
New York City does not allow shared electric scooters, although legislation has been introduced to change the rule.

## Forecast for Pendleton Area



## OREGON FORECAST

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



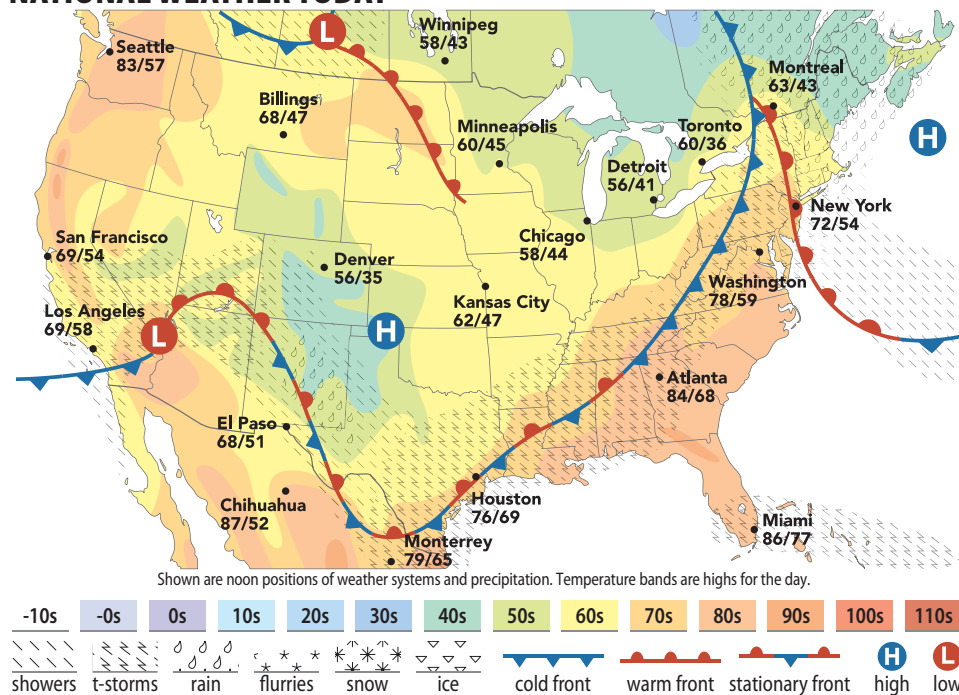
## ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	75°	44°
Normals	69°	45°
Records	91° (1940)	28° (1922)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	0.00"	
Normal month to date	0.33"	
Year to date	7.76"	
Last year to date	5.78"	
Normal year to date	5.44"	
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	80°	45°
Normals	71°	45°
Records	95° (1987)	31° (2010)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	0.00"	
Normal month to date	0.35"	
Year to date	3.88"	
Last year to date	4.62"	
Normal year to date	4.34"	
WINDS (in mph)		
Today	Sat.	
Boardman	ESE 3-6	SE 3-6
Pendleton	NNE 4-8	NNW 4-8
SUN AND MOON		
Sunrise today	5:31 a.m.	
Sunset tonight	8:13 p.m.	
Moonrise today	10:33 a.m.	
Moonset today	1:15 a.m.	

## NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)  
High 95° in McAllen, Texas Low 14° in Aspen Springs, Colo.

## NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



# State official supports delisting wolves in all Washington

By NICHOLAS K. GERANIOS  
Associated Press

SPOKANE, Wash. — Wolves should be removed from the federal endangered species list throughout Washington state, Washington Fish and Wildlife Director Kelly Susewind wrote in a letter to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released this week.

"This is the right direction for wolf conservation and management in our state long-term," Susewind wrote in a letter dated April 18 and released Wednesday. "The department is confident that Washington's wolf population is on a path leading to successful recovery."

The Center for Biological Diversity is critical of Susewind, saying the idea of stripping federal protections from wolves is appalling.

"This wolf-killing agency is tone-deaf to how Washington residents feel about these beautiful and ecologically essential animals," said Amaroq Weiss, West Coast wolf advocate for the environmental group. "The fact is 72% of residents want wolves federally protected until they're fully recovered."

The federal government has already delisted wolves in the eastern one-third of Washington and Oregon, as well as in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming.



AP Photo/Ted S. Warren, File  
In this March 7, 2019, file photo, Darlene Baker, of Sammamish, Wash., holds a photo of a wolf as she takes part in a protest at the Henry M. Jackson Federal Building in Seattle against a proposal made by the Trump administration to lift protections for gray wolves across the Lower 48 states.

Wolves were wiped out in Washington early in the last century, largely on behalf of livestock interests. The animals began moving back into the state about 20 years ago from neighboring Idaho and British Columbia.

The state in 2018 counted a minimum of 126 wolves in 27 packs with 15 successful breeding pairs, defined as male and female adults that have raised at least two pups that survived through the end of the year.

# Inslee changes tune, opposes Washington fossil-fuel projects

OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) — Washington Gov. Jay Inslee is changing course on his support of two fossil-fuel projects in the state.

Inslee spoke out against the projects following a bill signing Wednesday banning hydraulic fracking for oil and natural gas within Washington state, *The News Tribune* reported.

Inslee said he cannot in good conscience support the Puget Sound Energy's liquefied natural gas site under construction in Tacoma and a methanol production facility in Kalama.

"In the early days of

both projects, I said they could help reduce greenhouse gas emissions as we transition to cleaner energy sources, but I am no longer convinced that locking in these multi-decadal infrastructure projects are sufficient to accomplishing what's necessary," Inslee said in a news release.

Emerging science on the rapid pace of climate change and the environmental effects of natural gas now mean the state's efforts and future investments in energy infrastructure should focus on clean, renewable sources rather

than fossil fuels, he said. "The age of consequences is upon us," he said. "We have to act based on clear science."

Puget Sound Energy spokesman Andy Wappler pushed back, saying the company is confident that science and fact continue to support their facility. "It is very clear the approving local and other agencies understand the benefits" of the LNG site, he said.

Inslee is running for president, presenting himself as the leading climate-focused candidate in a crowded Democratic field.

**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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