

Walkout: Republican senators leave state as police are deployed

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an 18 to 12 majority in the chamber, but need 20 members present for a quorum.

"It's time for the Senate Republicans to show up and do the job they were elected to do," Brown, a Democrat, said at a news conference.

Republican senators appeared unfazed and ready to dig in.

"Send bachelors and come heavily armed," Sen. Brian Boquist, a Republican from Dallas, said late Wednesday as the prospect of a walkout loomed. "I'm not going to be a political prisoner in the state of Oregon. It's just that simple."

Boquist, who is reportedly in Idaho, did not respond to emails after the Senate president publicly rebuked him for the remarks.

This is the second time in this legislative session that minority GOP lawmakers have used a walkout as a way to slow the process. Democrats have a rare supermajority in the House and Senate,

meaning Republicans don't have many ways to influence the debate.

Republicans walked out of the Senate last month to block a school funding tax package. The standoff lasted four days, until the governor struck a deal to table legislation on gun control and vaccine requirements.

Hansell said that the written deal also included language that there would be a "reset" on cap and trade. He said when Republicans felt the deal had been nullified, with no real changes on House Bill 2020, Sen. Cliff Bentz spent several "intense" hours negotiating a deal with Brown's chief of staff Nik Blosser and Rep. Karin Power, D-Milwaukie.

One of the most important aspects to Hansell was taking out the bill's emergency clause in order to give citizens time to put together a ballot referendum, but he said Bentz told him that was a "nonstarter" for Power and Blosser.

After Democratic lead-

ers rejected the deal that was worked out shortly before 8 p.m., the Republican senators decided to go on strike.

"It's a decision we didn't take lightly, and we tried to avoid it," Hansell said.

He said if the vote hadn't been coming up so quickly they would have stayed to continue negotiating, and were still willing to negotiate. They were also willing to stay outside the state until after the session was constitutionally required to end, however, if Democrats wouldn't budge.

The walkout tactic is rare, but it has been used throughout history. Abraham Lincoln once leapt out of a window in an attempt to deny a quorum when he was a lawmaker in Illinois.

In 2003, Texas Democrats fled to neighboring Oklahoma to deny a quorum, holding up in a Holiday Inn to block a GOP redistricting bill. The Democrats returned to Texas after the bill's deadline passed, and it was effectively killed.

On Thursday, Oregon's Senate president pleaded with Republicans to return.

"I beg and beseech my fellow legislators to come to the floor. I need you, the Legislature needs you, the people of Oregon need you to pass budgets to take care of our citizens," Senate President Peter Courtney said on the Senate floor.

The walkout brings all Senate business to a halt with just over a week left in the legislative session. Senators still need to vote on the budget.

But the cap-and-trade legislation remains a sticking point.

Under the proposed bill, Oregon would put an overall limit on greenhouse gas emissions and auction off pollution "allowances" for each ton of carbon industries plan to emit. The legislation would lower that cap over time to encourage businesses to move away from fossil fuels: The state would reduce emissions to 45% below 1990 levels by 2035, and 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.

Those opposed to the cap-and-trade plan say it would exacerbate a growing divide between the liberal, urban parts of the state and the rural areas. The plan would increase the cost of fuel, damaging small business, truckers and the logging industry, they say.

"Protesting cap and trade by walking out today represents our constituency and exactly how we should be doing our job," said Senate Republican Leader Herman Baertschiger, Jr., of Grants Pass.

A small group of loggers gathered to protest outside the Capitol on Thursday.

Bridger Hasbrouck, a 32-year-old self-employed logger from Dallas, said the bill if passed would be "devastating" to his business because he uses diesel fuel to power all his logging equipment.

"There's a whole lot involved but the biggest thing that's very crippling is the fact that these bills would impose regulations that would take

trucks off the road that people are using to earn their living," he said.

Democrats say the measure is an efficient way to lower emissions while investing in low-income and rural communities' ability to adapt to climate change. It has the support of environmental groups, farmworkers and some trade unions.

The proposal also contains a \$10 million investment to protect workers adversely affected by climate change policy.

"Rural" here is not one voice," said Mimi Casteel, a farmer in rural Hopewell, Oregon. "This is not just about gas prices — this is about the future of humanity."

California has had for a decade an economy-wide, cap-and-trade policy like the one Oregon is considering. Nine northeastern states have more limited cap-and-trade programs that target only the power sector.

East Oregonian reporter Jade McDowell contributed to this story.

Health: Agencies work together to keep public, firefighters safe during fire season

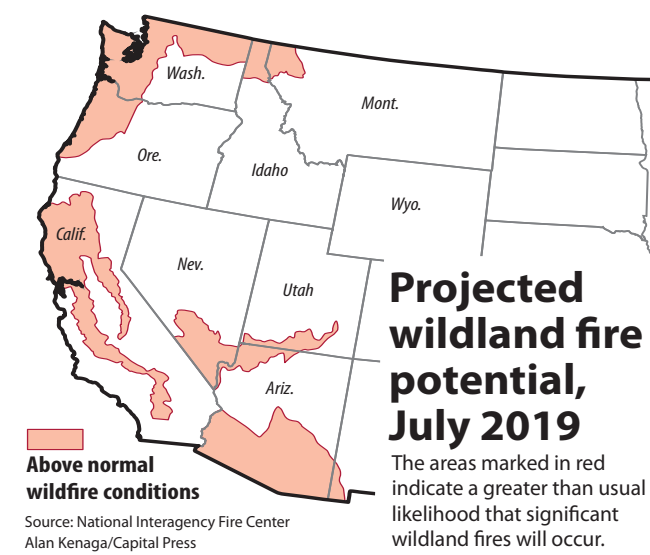
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ral disaster is far from predictable. Ryan Miller, acting assistant district forester for Oregon Department of Forestry in Prineville, said the 2019 fire season theme is an emphasis on firefighter and public safety.

"No matter what, no fire is worth someone's life. You'll be hearing this message from us throughout the season," he said.

Safety means attacking fires from safe areas, evacuating people when fire risks their homes, complying with burn bans and other fire restrictions and reducing hazardous fuels around homes.

"There are ways people can modify their activity," Miller said. "By creating space around homes and structures you not only protect the property, but also the lives



of the fire fighters."

Land and fire managers have been working with homeowners to reduce the risk of loss to wildfires for many years, but a newer threat to firefighter safety and suppression efforts are drones run by hobbyists and journalists hoping to get aerial photos of an

active wildfire.

"It's been a big problem — a lot of people are flying them," Miller said. "If we see them, we will shut down all operations immediately until the air is clear and safe."

As the cost of drones has come down, their use has increased. Miller said in 2017

there were 36 encounters with drones on wildfires, down from 41 in 2016. He said flying a drone during a wildfire is illegal and subject to a large fine or mandatory court appearance.

Also affecting health and safety, yet not as easy to manage, is air quality.

"Smoke management and air quality have been big topics the last fire seasons," Miller said. "Right now, we are seeing quite a bit of smoke from northern Alberta."

People try to mitigate smoke during summer inversions by wearing bandanas or dust masks over their faces, but Miller said they do not work. He suggested people where masks recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency rated "M95" or "P100" to limit some particulate matter from entering into the lungs.

Smoke from wildfires is monitored by the state's Department of Environmental Quality. The agency has monitors all over the state called nephelometers that feed data into an online program. The website tracks air quality every hour of the day for each of the sites listed on an interactive map.

Oregon Department of Forestry meteorologist Nick Yonker said the agency is setting up more nephelometers this summer so his staff can monitor the effects of wildfire and decide if prescribed fire or field burning is prudent based on air quality.

Air quality indices are estimates based on the amount of particulate matter in the atmosphere like ozone, nitrogen dioxide or sulfur dioxide. These particulates, in large amounts, can get deep into the lungs and impair cardiovas-

cular functions. Today, every monitor in Oregon is reporting good air quality. During fire season, the air quality can change quickly when smoke settles in from all over the West.

"When the air is kinda hazy and you don't see the mountains, that's a moderate level of air quality and it could have an impact if someone has asthma or other cardiopulmonary issues," Yonker said.

Once the air quality reaches the third level, "unhealthy for sensitive groups," people with lung ailments are encouraged to stay inside and should have air filtration. Healthier people can handle bad air quality into the "unhealthy" and even the "very unhealthy" stages, but are encouraged to stay inside and use air filtration by the time it reaches the highest level of "hazardous."



EO File Photo

Milton-Freewater School District superintendent Rob Clark talks about the passing of the school bond at a ground breaking ceremony for the new Gib Olinger Elementary School in May 2017 in Milton-Freewater. Clark counted the bond and the new school it resulted in as one of the highlights of his tenure at the district.

Clark: M-F superintendent resigns

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East Oregonian Thursday, Clark explained why he was leaving Eastern Oregon for Washington's Olympic Peninsula.

Clark said he already owns a condominium in the area and the move would put them closer to him and his wife's families.

Additionally, he spent 28 years of his career in Washington before relocating to Milton-Freewater and he'd like to work at least two more years in Washington for retirement purposes.

Clark admitted his departure comes late in public education's hiring season, but his soon-to-be predecessor took a job outside the K-12 system and he didn't announce his resignation until early May.

"I'm ready to start my new adventure," he said. For the school board's part, it doesn't seem to be sweating the prospect of finding a new leader in a short time frame.

"We'll look at what we want, and during this com-

ing year we'll probably have an interim superintendent," Milton-Freewater School Board President Duane Geyer told the *Union-Bulletin*. "We'll let the dust settle so we can have multiple options. We're not required to look outside the district, or we can. I think it's great when someone can come up through the system. We're in good shape."

The school board will hold a special meeting June 24 to discuss the transition period.

With Clark set to depart from the district on July 3, he can now put his time in Milton-Freewater in perspective.

Clark said the highlight of his tenure with the district was passing a \$12.5 million bond in 2016, a development that built Milton-Freewater's first new school in nearly a century.

The district was aided by \$19 million in state and private grants that were contingent on the bond passing, but supporters were still trying to convince a voter base that hadn't approved a bond

since 1982 and had rejected multiple attempts since that time.

Once the bond passed, the district was able to renovate all of its schools and completely reconfigure its elementary schools.

The bond funded the construction of Gib Olinger Elementary School, a multi-story building that serves K-3.

With so many students being moved to Gib Olinger, the district was able to demolish Grove Elementary School and put a sports complex in its place and repurpose Freewater Elementary School for other programs.

Clark said he was also proud that he was able to raise the number of Latino teachers and the district's academic performance.

In a district where more than half of the students identify as Hispanic or Latino, 16% of Milton-Freewater's faculty was considered "racially/ethnically diverse" in 2017-18 up from 10% in 2013-14, according to the 2018 Oregon Educator Equity Report.

Bees: Men tend hives behind razor wire

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beekeepers only has two hives, this was a blow.

The program started three months ago with eight inmates. Peters, EOCI's inmate work program coordinator, agreed to guide the novice beekeepers though he himself had little experience in tending bees. Fortunately Peters is a quick study.

"We're all learning together as we go," he said prior to a recent classroom session.

Peters isn't a guy who discourages easily. He used the disappearance of the queen as another lesson in bee behavior.

The men learned about what happens to the worker bees when a queen leaves a hive. One of the students read aloud from his beekeeper's handbook.

"When a colony loses its queen ... some workers may start to lay eggs," he read. "Since they are incapable of mating, their eggs will be infertile. Therefore the population of a hive that has laying workers will slowly decline."

To head off inevitable doom, the men would spend the latter part of the session combining their queenless colony with their other hive, which has a queen, but is relatively weak in numbers. The men watched a video about how to accomplish the maneuver.

"I'll be talking you through it," Peters said. "We're going to make some bees angry today."

Joining two beehives is a delicate operation. You don't just dump a queenless colony of bees into another hive like a group of unwelcome guests.

Peters and five of his beekeepers donned bee suits, got a smoker and headed out to the hives, which sat on a concrete pad surrounded by chain-link fence. The other students looked on.

Patrick Gazely-Romney and Antonio Ledesma fired up the smoker to help calm the bees during the process. They wafted smoke into the queenless hive and opened it up, removing frames filled with bees and shaking them off. The idea was to consolidate them onto fewer frames. The beekeepers removed the covers of the intact hive and placed halves of the doomed hive on each end. In between, the men placed pages of the "New York Times" sports section.

"The bees will gradually chew through the newspaper until the colonies unite. The paper slows the process so the two colonies can become accustomed to each other, and by the time they actually unite they will behave as a single colony," Peters said. "The pheromones of the queen will suppress the laying worker and we will have — hopefully — a good strong colony."

One of the beekeepers, Anthony McDougald calmly watched the action from the other side of the chainlink fence. He said he doesn't feel anxious around the bees.

"I listen to the hum of the bees. It relaxes me," he said. "If you're upset, they're upset."

When the mission was accomplished, the men walked back to the classroom. Only time would tell whether they had succeeded.

More than 100 men applied for this program. Peters said the students will work to earn their apprentice beekeeping certification. Other shops on the prison campus provide support for the beekeepers. The carpenter shop built hives, the grounds crew planted flowers and the metal shop fabricated tools.

The men seem taken with their new vocation.

"It's a good opportunity to do something positive," said

David Saucedo. "It's something to take with me."

One of the beekeepers, Jonathan Montes, frets over the future of bees which serve as the world's pollinators. He urged people to "plant bee-friendly flowers in their yards." He said the bee training gives him motivation and he plans to continue beekeeping on the outside after his release.

"This program has helped me stay on track," Montes said. "It keeps me in a positive mind frame and focused on getting out."

Last week, Peters' mentor, Hermiston beekeeper Jan Lohman, inspected the combined hive and delivered some bad news.

"Her diagnosis was that the combination was a failure — the laying workers killed the queen," Peters said. "Our hopes for that hive now rest on a single capped queen cell; we're hoping they raise it to maturity and she is able to successfully mate and take over the hive."

The outlook isn't good though, he admitted.

"Jan was pessimistic enough that she donated another colony to us in an act of tremendous generosity," Peters said. "We placed it last Wednesday, and will be checking on it this coming week."

He remains staunchly optimistic. His guys learned plenty after their queen bee flew off into the sunset. They gain knowledge every time they run across a new scenario.

And their luck hasn't been all bad.

"We've been doing this for three months," he said, "and have yet to have someone stung."

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