

Timber Unity movement gets presidential invite

By **AUBREY WIEBER AND CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE**
Oregon Capital Bureau

know what the event would entail, or who else would be there, but he's looking forward to the trip.

"We have an opportunity to let the voice of rural America to be heard," Stoffel said.

The Timber Unity Facebook page created its first post June 21, and already has more than 47,000 members.

Those behind the group were chief organizers of a large rally at the Capitol on June 27, protesting House Bill 2020, which would have capped the state's greenhouse gas emissions.

Bowers said she got word from a political friend during the rally that the White House was watching what was happening in Oregon. She announced it to the crowd, which erupted with applause.

Bowers said the White House reached out to Nick Smith, executive director for Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities, a logging-friendly nonprofit that started in Roseburg, during the rally. The White House asked Smith who from Oregon should attend the event, and he said Timber Unity, Bowers said.

Bowers was told of the invitation after the rally, and got the official invitation Tuesday.

The cap-and-trade proposal, which prompted Sen-



AP Photo/Sarah Zimmerman, File

A convoy of trucks and tractors circle the Oregon Capitol on June 27, 2019, in Salem.

ate Republicans to avoid the Senate for nine days in protest late last month to prevent a vote on it, died at the end of the legislative session.

Stoffel said many have been surprised at how Timber Unity took off, but he said there are parallels to the national uprising of rural, working-class Americans who have become more vocal since Trump took office.

"A couple guys had an idea and they created a Facebook page. It's been word of mouth from there," Stoffel said. "This is a voice for rural Oregon, rural America, that we're tired of being steamrolled, which is what a lot of the policies seem to do for us. The stuff that's passed is about the big cities, especially in Oregon. There are

other parts of the state of Oregon other than just Portland."

The Timber Unity movement casts itself as purely grassroots, according to several Republican lawmakers and protesters.

However, they are in part financed by Stimson Lumber CEO Andrew Miller, a frequent GOP donor who is prominent on the Timber Unity Facebook page and has a letter explaining his \$5,000 seed donation on their website.

Stoffel said he didn't know what their current funding level is. Its political action committee shows \$31,457, according to state campaign finance records.

A GoFundMe campaign that popped up when the group was getting organized

received money from several sympathetic business partners, though the group has moved to a direct funding channel on their website.

Stoffel said Timber Unity shut down the GoFundMe as organizers learned it didn't comply with state requirements to report political spending and contributions.

Timber Unity's website shows its organizers as three truckers: Jeff Leavy, Adam Lardy and Scott Hileman.

The White House invitation is the apparent culmination of several weeks of national attention on the Republican walkout, which was picked up by outlets from the *New York Times* to Vice to Fox News.

At least one environmental advocate worried it could "deepen" divides between parties on the issue of how to tackle climate change.

"Growing up here, there was not this strong, partisan us-versus-them divide," said Meredith Connolly, Oregon director for Climate Solutions, which was a strong supporter of cap and trade. "And I think adopting this mantle of Trump's White House and his agenda, I fear, will deepen those divides here in Oregon, and I want us to be moving forward toward solutions that work for all of Oregon. And I think the more this is influenced

by Donald Trump's divisive-ness, I worry this will take us in the wrong direction."

Stoffel said the issue is rural versus urban, Republican versus Democrat.

He said Democrats at the Legislature "snubbed their noses" at loggers and truckers who wanted to understand the bill. Republicans embraced them, he said.

But it was Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, who ended the walkout and standoff over cap and trade by announcing that his own caucus didn't have the votes to pass the bill.

"The rural parts of this country have been ignored for years," Stoffel said, adding Trump's election proves that. "The majority of Americans are tired of the same old, same old."

Stoffel said he understands the majority of voters put Democrats who ran on cap and trade in office, but said that's because rural voters have routinely been pushed down. They stay home because they know they will be "steamrolled" by the Democratic agenda, he said.

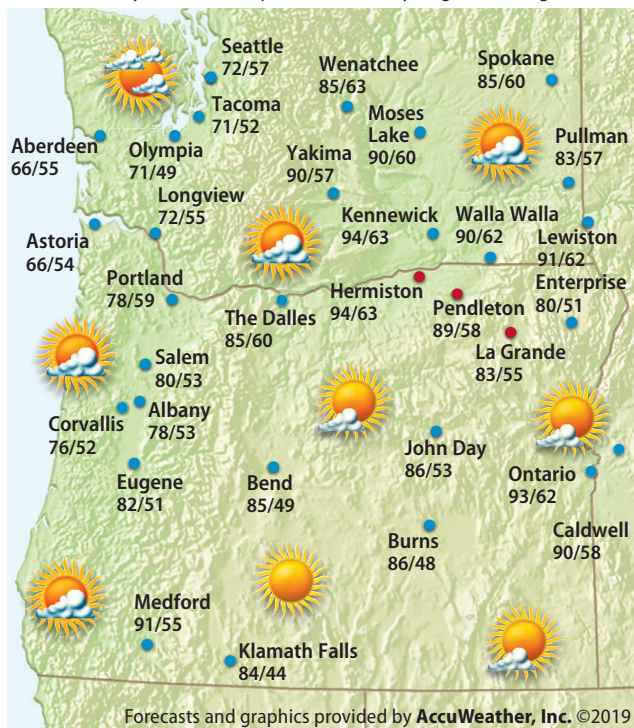
Democrats and environmentalists pushing climate legislation said House Bill 2020 was tailored to protect rural Oregon, driving dollars from the cities to projects in rural communities.

Forecast for Pendleton Area

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Mostly sunny and pleasant	Mostly sunny and comfortable	Intervals of clouds and sunshine	Partly sunny and pleasant	Increasing cloudiness
PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
89° 58°	85° 56°	81° 55°	82° 56°	88° 60°
HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
94° 63°	89° 60°	85° 61°	87° 59°	92° 65°

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	83°	49°
Normals	86°	56°
Records	107° (1975)	40° (1918)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.02"
Normal month to date	0.04"
Year to date	9.59"
Last year to date	6.49"
Normal year to date	7.61"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	84°	55°
Normals	86°	57°
Records	106° (1942)	38° (2012)

PRECIPITATION

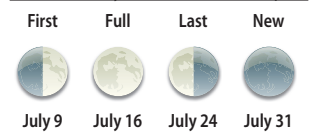
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	Trace
Normal month to date	0.03"
Year to date	4.55"
Last year to date	5.10"
Normal year to date	5.73"

WINDS (in mph)

	Today	Sat.
Boardman	WSW 6-12	WSW 7-14
Pendleton	NW 4-8	W 7-14

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	5:12 a.m.
Sunset tonight	8:47 p.m.
Moonrise today	8:33 a.m.
Moonset today	11:18 p.m.

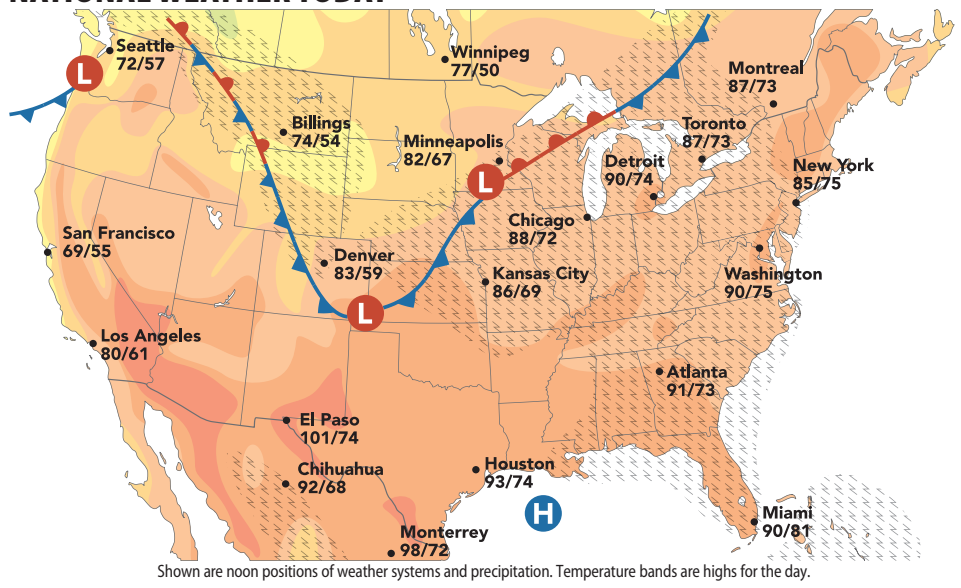


NATIONAL EXTREMES

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

High 106° in Gila Bend, Ariz. Low 30° in Stanley, Idaho

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Oregon's 'Christmas tree bill' pumps out more than a billion to local projects

The bill was one of the last to pass, and gives politicians pork to bring back to districts

By **CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE AND AUBREY WIEBER**,
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Christmas has come to Oregon's legislators.

In one of the final steps of the 2019 Legislature, lawmakers overwhelmingly passed a massive bill to deliver about \$1.32 billion to projects across the state, from Clackamas to Harney counties.

One of the least controversial bills to pass this session, it was released less than a week before lawmakers went home for the year.

"It's Christmas in July," said Rep. Cedric Hayden, R-Roseburg.

Hayden was referring to the bill's colloquial term: the Christmas Tree bill.

It's a biennial tradition. The bill, line by line, appropriates money for projects in nearly every legislative district in the state — a catalog of political favors. It gives money to nearly 100 projects that will help local districts, plus bolsters many more statewide initiatives.

A new jail, the remodel of a historic theater, sustainability funds for a federal fish hatchery — it's all in House Bill 5050.

Some lawmakers rail against it, while others relish the opportunity to bring pork back home to constituents.

"Sometimes what you receive for Christmas is

a great thing, and sometimes you are disappointed in what you did or did not get," Hayden said.

Hayden expressed some concern with the bill, but it also included \$1.4 million he had been asking for to keep the Leaburg Hatchery east of Eugene in operation.

Hayden said the Christmas Tree bill acknowledges problems in rural parts of the state that go ignored.

"Often these cities feel as if their voices aren't heard," he said.

While the bill received a unanimous vote in the Senate, there were four dissenters in the House: Rep. Ken Helm, D-Beaverton, Rep. Mike Nearman, R-Independence, Rep. Bill Post, R-Keizer, and Rep. E. Werner Reschke, R-Klamath Falls.

Reschke, who could not be reached for comment Tuesday, tweeted that he voted "no" on the most bills of any state representative this session: 277 times.

Nearman and Post are former winners of the self-awarded honor.

Post didn't return a request for comment, but bashed the bill on Twitter, referring to it as the "pork roll bill" that only works for those who play the game.

The bill funds projects of all kinds:

- \$200,000 to buy 160 acres of forest alongside the Willamette National Forest Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area.
- \$1 million to the city of Salem for the Gerry Frank/Salem Rotary Amphitheatre.
- \$1 million to the develop a former seafood packing plant, \$2 million for a new jail and \$1 million to improve a local theater, all in Astoria.

The legislation also

funds statewide projects, such as \$200,000 to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife for predator control, \$275,000 for jail data analysis and \$78,242 to process reports of police profiling.

The bill also includes money for internal auditors at the Oregon Liquor Control Commission and the Oregon Business Development Department — a problem lawmakers highlighted before the legislative session.

Rep. Dan Rayfield, D-Corvallis, led the budget writing committee, along with Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, and Sen. Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, D-Portland.

The three ran a tight ship: Rayfield said budget writers left a larger than usual balance at the end — but some wanted to use that money for more projects.

"Every single day, people wanted you to dip into that ending fund balance," Rayfield said. "You really were, like, slapping hands away from the cookie jar. For the last two weeks, I felt that's all I was doing."

Throughout the session, budget writers get attention from advocates, lawmakers, and state agencies asking for certain investments in their communities.

"Everybody comes calling," Rayfield said. "Cities and counties are the number one, I would say, folks that hop on the list, where their pocketbooks are somewhat constrained by what they can do. Sometimes they're constrained by voters, but there are essential functions in that county that need to occur," such as building or renovating jails and courthouses.

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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