

Ditch-cleaning bill passes, but Brown has yet to sign it

Growers would be allowed to remove ditch dirt without a state fill-removal permit

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

SALEM — A proposal to streamline ditch-cleaning regulations got in just under the wire to win approval from Oregon lawmakers, though farmers will likely wait another year to use the program.

Growers would be allowed to remove up to 3,000 cubic yards of dirt per mile of ditch over five years without a state fill-removal permit under House Bill 2437, up from 50 cubic yards per year under existing law.

The bill's fate was uncertain as Republican senators walked out to prevent a vote on a controversial climate bill toward the end of the legislative session.

However, they returned in time for the Senate to vote 18-9 in favor of HB 2437 on June 29, the day before the Legislature adjourned for the year. The bill had already passed the House 42-17 about two weeks earlier.



Farmer John Scharf explains the drainage of tile lines from his fields near Amity into a ditch. A compromise bill passed by the Legislature would allow farmers to clean out ditches more easily.

The bill continues to face opposition from some environmental groups, which would welcome a veto from Gov. Kate Brown. The governor has until Aug. 9 to decide whether to sign the bill.

"From our point of view, this bill takes things back decades as far as wetland

protection," said Kimberley Priestley, senior policy analyst for the Waterwatch of Oregon nonprofit.

Farmers who clean ditches under the program would first have to notify the Oregon Department of Agriculture of their plans, which would be reviewed by the

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Work could only take place during the dry season and the streamlined rules would not apply to essential salmonid habitat.

Opponents of the bill worry about the unintended consequences of removing a

much larger quantity of sediment from ditches, as well as the effect of depositing the material in wetlands, said Priestley.

They're also troubled by the lack of public notice for proposed ditch-cleaning.

"I think there are citizens across the state that are inter-

ested in these types of projects," she said.

If the bill is signed into law, it doesn't go into effect until January 2020. Implementing the new rules will also require a memorandum of understanding between ODA and the Oregon Department of State Lands, which oversees fill-removal permits.

The two agencies will decide whether additional rule-making is necessary to implement the bill and there is no timeline for when the new regulations will become operational, said Meliah Masiba, legislative coordinator for DSL.

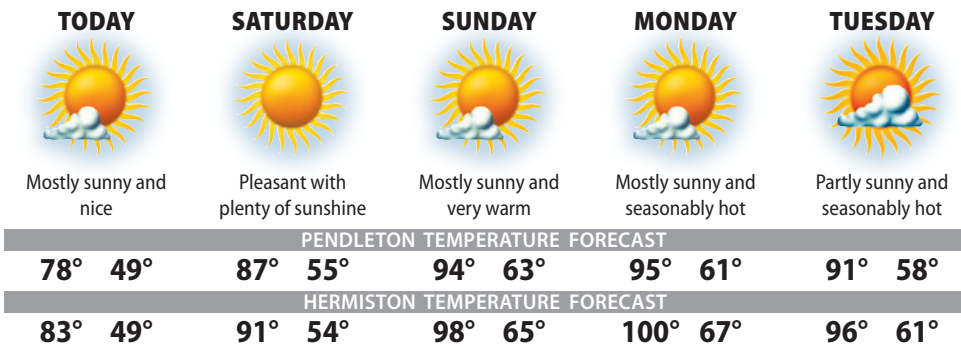
The bill's language is comprehensive enough that rule-making may not be necessary, said Mary Anne Cooper, vice president of public policy for the Oregon Farm Bureau.

Even so, it's likely that farmers will have to wait until next spring to provide notices and the following summer or autumn to clean ditches under the program, Cooper said.

The Farm Bureau will be keeping an eye on the program's progress as it's implemented.

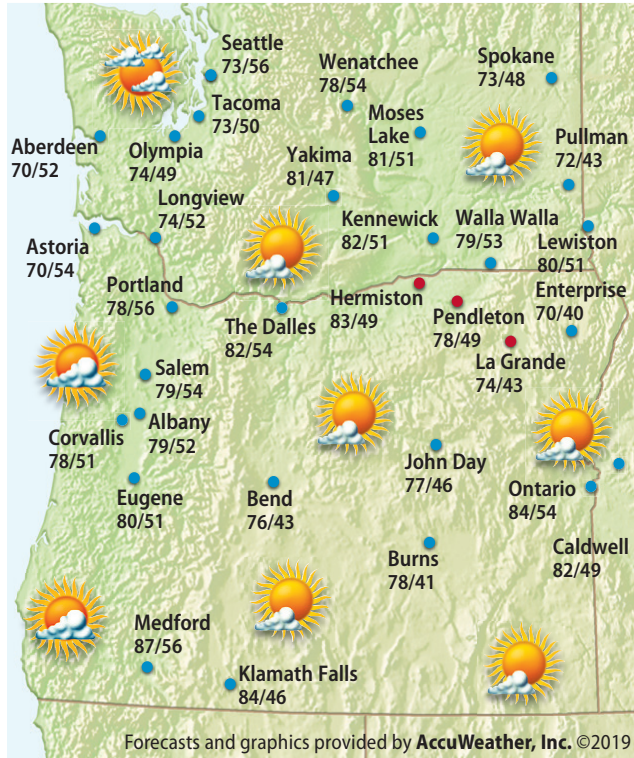
"Our number one priority is ease of use for farmers," Cooper said.

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	80°	64°
Normals	89°	59°
Records	108° (1960)	43° (1915)

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	84°	67°
Normals	90°	59°
Records	109° (1960)	43° (1945)

WINDS (in mph)

Boardman	SSW 4-8	NE 4-8
Pendleton	W 6-12	N 4-8

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	5:24 a.m.
Sunset tonight	8:39 p.m.
Moonrise today	10:31 p.m.
Moonset today	8:00 a.m.

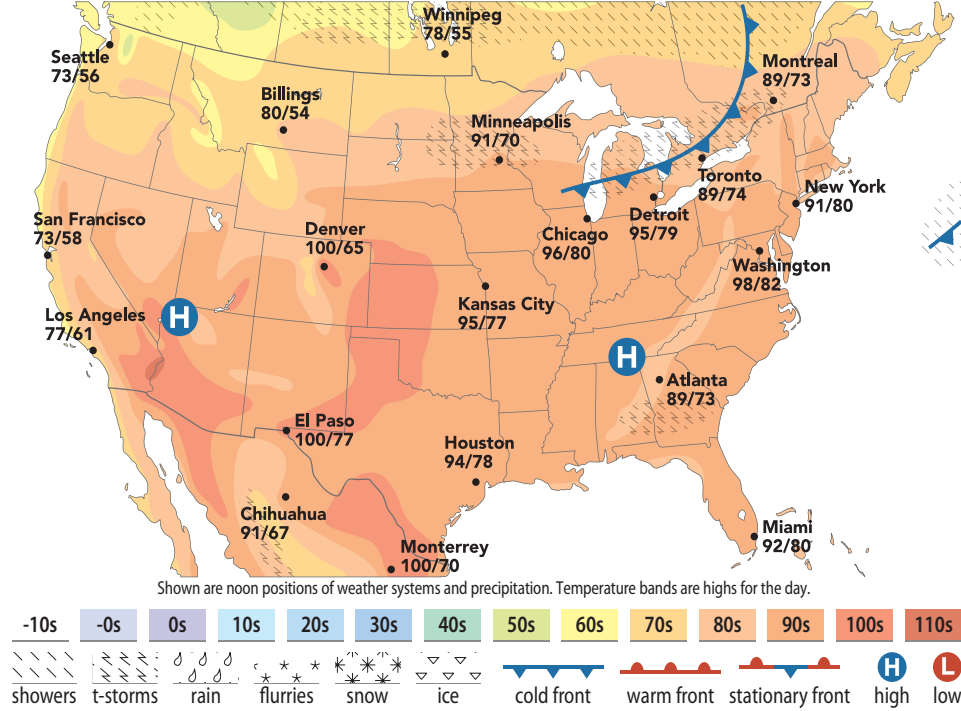


NATIONAL EXTREMES

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

High 109° in Needles, Calif. Low 35° in Gothic, Colo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.



Safe firearms storage measure planned for Oregon 2020 ballot

By JONATHAN LEVINSON
Oregon Public Broadcasting

SALEM — Oregon-based gun safety group State of Safety Action filed an initiative petition Thursday to put a safe firearms storage law on the November 2020 ballot.

The group got a late start in 2018 and missed a deadline to get its initiative on the 2018 ballot. During this year's legislative session safe storage legislation was part of the omnibus gun bill that was bargained away by Gov. Kate Brown in order to coax Republican Senators back to

work and vote on an education funding bill.

The safe storage law would require gun owners to lock up their firearms when not in use and report stolen guns within 24 hours or be held liable for any damages.

State of Safety Action president Henry Wessinger said the group conducted a statewide poll and found that 65% of registered voters support a safe storage law.

"I just completed an online NRA hunting course and it's exactly the same type of information that they recommend," Wessinger said.

In 2016, 82% of the Ore-

gon's 503 firearm deaths were death by suicide. That's compared with 59% nationally.

In 2018, a team of researchers at the RAND Corporation looked at how different kinds of gun laws impact things like homicide and suicide. The lead researcher on that study said they found that safe storage laws can reduce the number of lives lost to suicide and unintentional injury.

Wessinger said State of Safety Action is preparing for a ballot initiative but the group is still optimistic the legislation will be taken up in the 2020 legislative session.

BRIEFLY

Bend repeals local bag ban ahead of state law

BEND (AP) — The Bend City Council has repealed a local plastic bag ban to allow the state's ban to take over.

The *Bend Bulletin* reports that the idea to repeal the local law was floated last month as a way to eliminate confusion between the local law — which started July 1 — and the state law slated to begin in January.

With the repeal, voted on Wednesday, now in effect, local retailers will no longer be officially required to charge 10 cents for paper bags.

The city council in December established an ordinance to ban plastic grocery bags in Bend after months of lobbying from a community group and middle school students.

The state law, signed by Gov. Kate Brown on June 20, dictates that all retail establishments will not be allowed to provide single-use plastic bags, but allows retailers to provide recycled paper bags, reusable heavy plastic bags, or reusable fabric bags for a charge of at least 5 cents per bag.

Vancouver man sentenced in mother's killing

VANCOUVER, Wash. (AP) — A man will serve more than 34 years in prison for killing his mother and dismembering her body in 2017 at her Vancouver home.

The *Columbian* reports 48-year-old Kenneth Moore was sentenced Wednesday.

He was convicted by a Clark County Superior Court jury June 11 of first-degree murder, with an enhancement for an egregious lack of remorse, in the death of 60-year-old Leisa Holt, and assault with a

firearm on a law enforcement officer.

The assault conviction stems from Moore pointing a rifle at a responding officer.

Senior Deputy Prosecutor Kasey Vu told the jury that over three days, Moore strangled and stabbed Holt and cut up her body for disposal. Vu argued that Moore was angry at Holt, who tended to him, likely over her boyfriend.

Holt's body was discovered Feb. 17, 2017, after her boyfriend and police conducted a welfare check.

Oregon man given probation for sales of counterfeit scopes

PORTLAND (AP) — An Oregon business owner who sold counterfeit rifle scopes from China has received five years of federal probation.

The *Oregonian*/OregonLive reported Thursday that 58-year-old CulMar Outdoors owner Mark Culp was sentenced Thursday.

The Portland suburb business owner says he sold 13 Chinese-made Leupold scopes far below the market price.

Officials say Leupold & Stevens Inc. personnel purchased the online products, confirmed the forgeries and notified authorities.

Leupold also makes range finders, binoculars and thermal sensors for sporting, shooting and military applications.

Prosecutors say Culp made about \$3,700 online.

Culp says it is "a hard lesson learned" and he intends to move forward with his life and business.

Culp retired from the U.S. Air Force in 2010 and has no prior criminal record.

EAST OREGONIAN
— Founded Oct. 16, 1875 —
211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton 541-276-2211
333 E. Main St., Hermiston 541-567-6211
Office hours: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Closed major holidays

EastOregonian.com
To subscribe, call 1-800-522-0255
or go online to EastOregonian.com
and click on 'Subscribe'

East Oregonian (USPS 164-980) is published daily except Sunday,
Monday and postal holidays, by the EO Media Group, 211 S.E. Byers
Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801. Periodicals postage paid at Pendleton, OR.
Postmaster: send address changes to
East Oregonian, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801.
Copyright © 2019, EO Media Group

Subscriber services:
For mail delivery, online access, vacation stops
or delivery concerns call 1-800-522-0255 ext. 1

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

	Local home delivery	Savings (cover price)
EZPay	\$13/month	60 percent
52 weeks	\$173.67	41 percent
26 weeks	\$91.86	38 percent
13 weeks	\$47.77	36 percent

*EZ Pay = one-year rate with a monthly credit
or debit card/check charge

Single copy price:
\$1.50 Tuesday through Saturday

Circulation Dept.
800-781-3214

ADVERTISING
Regional Publisher and Revenue Director:
• Christopher Rush
541-278-2669 • crush@eomediagroup.com

Advertising Services:
• Angela Treadwell
541-966-0827 • atreadwell@eastoregonian.com
• Grace Bubar
541-276-2214 • gbubar@eastoregonian.com

Multimedia Consultants:
• Jeanne Jewett
541-564-4531 • jjewett@eastoregonian.com
• Audra Workman
541-564-4538 • aworkman@eastoregonian.com

Business Office Coordinator
• Dayle Stinson
541-278-2670 • dstinson@eastoregonian.com

Classified & Legal Advertising
1-800-962-2819 or 541-278-2678
classifieds@eastoregonian.com or legals@eastoregonian.com

NEWS
• To submit news tips and press releases:
call 541-966-0818 or email news@eastoregonian.com
• To submit community events, calendar items and Your EO News:
email community@eastoregonian.com or call Tammy Malgesini
at 541-564-4539 or Renee Struthers at 541-966-0818.
• To submit engagements, weddings and anniversaries:
email rstruthers@eastoregonian.com or visit eastoregonian.com/community/announcements
• To submit sports or outdoors information or tips:
541-966-0838 • sports@eastoregonian.com

Business Office Manager:
541-966-0824

COMMERCIAL PRINTING
Production Manager: Mike Jensen
541-215-0824 • mjensen@eastoregonian.com