

U.S. judge blocks Trump’s health insurance rule for immigrants

Seven U.S. citizens and nonprofit organization filed the federal lawsuit

Associated Press

PORTLAND — A federal judge in Portland on Saturday put on hold a Trump administration rule requiring immigrants prove they will have health insurance or can pay for medical care before they can get visas.

U.S. District Judge Michael Simon granted a preliminary injunction that prevents the rule from going into effect Sunday. It’s not clear when he will rule on the merits of the case.

Seven U.S. citizens and a nonprofit organization filed the federal lawsuit Wednesday contending the rule would block nearly two-thirds of all prospective legal immigrants.

The lawsuit also said the rule would greatly reduce or eliminate the number of immigrants who enter the United States with family-sponsored visas.

“We’re very grateful that the court recognized the need to block the health care ban immediately,” says Justice Action Center senior litigator Esther Sung, who



AP Photo/Rebecca Blackwell, File

Local residents with visas walk across the Puerta Mexico international bridge to enter the U.S., in Matamoros, Tamaulipas state, Mexico.

argued at Saturday’s hearing on behalf of the plaintiffs. “The ban would separate families and cut two-thirds of green card-based immigration starting tonight, were the ban not stopped.”

The proclamation signed by President Donald Trump in early October applies to people seeking immigrant visas from abroad — not those in the U.S. already. It

does not affect lawful permanent residents. It does not apply to asylum-seekers, refugees or children.

The proclamation says immigrants will be barred from entering the country unless they are to be covered by health insurance within 30 days of entering or have enough financial resources to pay for any medical costs.

The rule is the Trump

administration’s latest effort to limit immigrant access to public programs while trying to move the country away from a family-based immigration system to a merit-based system.

The White House said in a statement at the time the proclamation was issued that too many non-citizens were taking advantage of the country’s “generous public

health programs,” and said immigrants contribute to the problem of “uncompensated health care costs.”

Under the government’s visa rule, the required insurance can be bought individually or provided by an employer and it can be short-term coverage or catastrophic.

Medicaid doesn’t count, and an immigrant can’t get a

visa if using the Affordable Care Act’s subsidies when buying insurance. The federal government pays for those subsidies.

According to the Migration Policy Institute, a non-partisan immigration think tank, 57% of U.S. immigrants had private health insurance in 2017, compared with 69% of U.S.-born, and 30% had public health insurance coverage, compared with 36% of native-born.

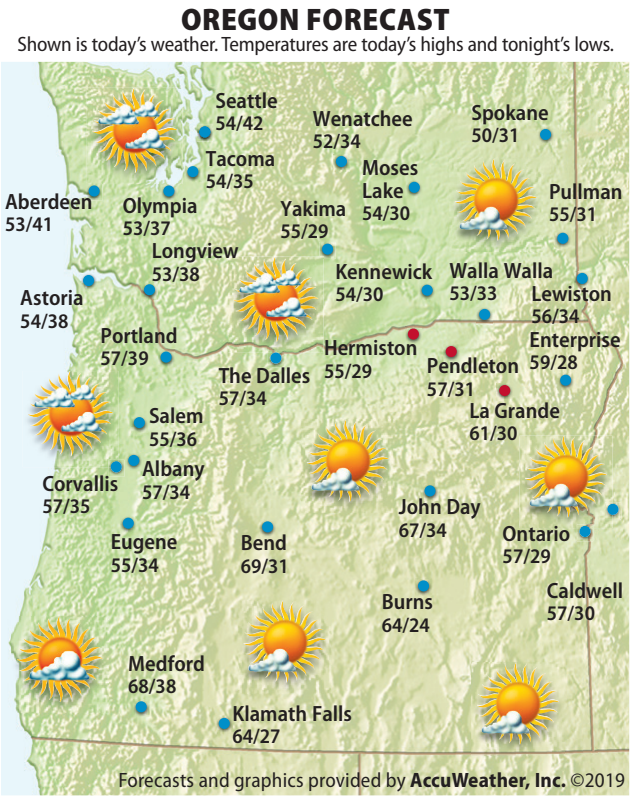
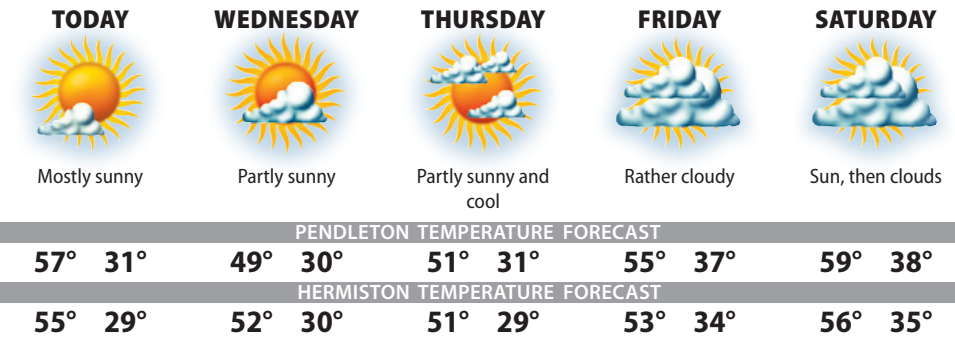
The uninsured rate for immigrants dropped from 32% to 20% from 2013 to 2017, since the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, according to Migration Policy.

There are about 1.1 million people who obtain green cards each year.

“Countless thousands across the country can breathe a sigh of relief today because the court recognized the urgent and irreparable harm that would have been inflicted” without the hold, said Jesse Bless, director of federal litigation at the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

Earlier this year, the administration made sweeping changes to regulations that would deny green cards to immigrants who use some forms of public assistance, but the courts have blocked that measure.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



ALMANAC

PENDLETON

through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	59°	30°
Normals	55°	35°
Records	77° (1975)	15° (1935)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.00"
Normal month to date	0.15"
Year to date	11.31"
Last year to date	8.25"
Normal year to date	10.14"

HERMISTON

through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	58°	25°
Normals	56°	35°
Records	77° (1975)	7° (1935)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.00"
Normal month to date	0.14"
Year to date	4.94"
Last year to date	6.46"
Normal year to date	7.42"

WINDS (in mph)

Today	Wed.	
Boardman	ENE 3-6	NE 3-6
Pendleton	NW 4-8	NW 4-8

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	6:40 a.m.
Sunset tonight	4:37 p.m.
Moonrise today	2:13 p.m.
Moonset today	none

Full

Last

New

First

Nov 12

Nov 19

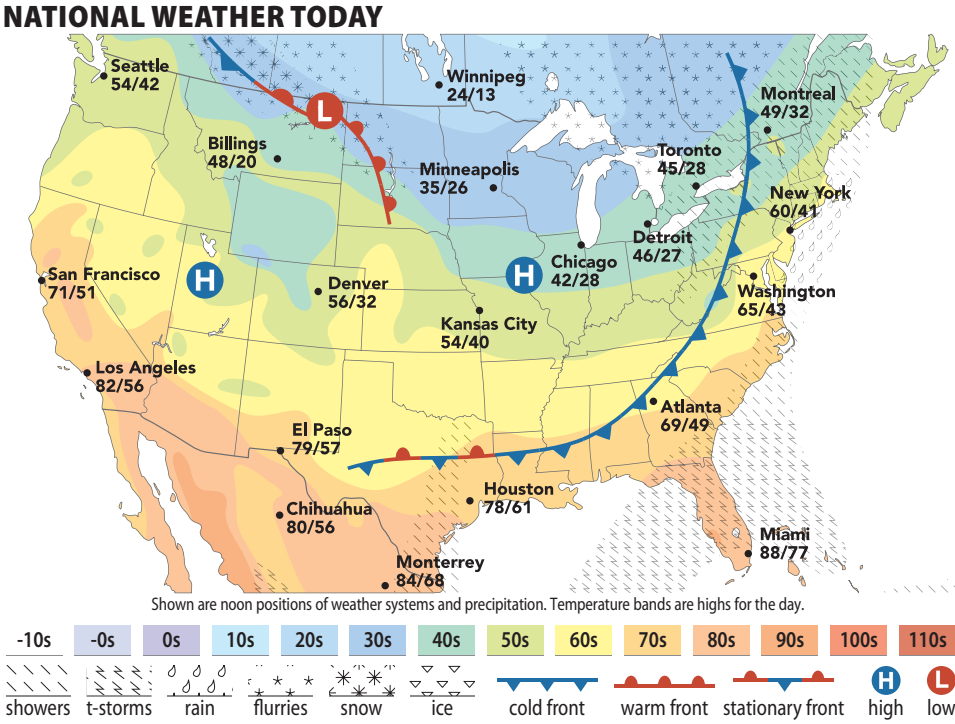
Nov 26

Dec 3

NATIONAL EXTREMES

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

High 90° in Naples, Fla. Low 4° in Lake George, Colo.



Poplar acreage headed for auction

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

PORTLAND — More than 3,000 acres of farmland along the Columbia River in Oregon will be auctioned off as a timber investment firm discontinues growing poplar trees.

Greenwood Resources, an investment company that owns and manages forestland, is selling off the final 12 parcels of what was once part of a much larger 31,000-acre poplar operation in Oregon and Washington.

“This was the last asset in this investment,” said John Rosenthal, president of Realty Marketing/Northwest, a real estate company that’s handling the auction.

The minimum bid for the all the Columbia County properties combined is nearly \$8 million, but potential buyers may also bid on individual parcels ranging in price from about \$100,000 to \$2.6 million each. Sealed bids are due by Nov. 13.

Roughly 2,000 acres still have poplar trees growing on them, more than 500 acres are fallow farmland

and the remaining acreage is considered “non-commercial” land that can be dedicated to wildlife habitat and recreation.

Nearly 1,400 acres have water rights for irrigation and the parcels are located near the Port Westward Industrial Park, Rosenthal said.

“It’s an interesting collection,” he said. “It’s an unusual asset.”

Representatives of Greenwood Resources did not respond to request for comment, but timber industry experts say the company’s withdrawal from poplar production was likely motivated by the tough economics of growing pulpwood for a U.S. paper industry facing stiff international competition.

The low profit margins of producing poplar probably weren’t enough to justify growing the trees on irrigated land in a desirable climate, said Gordon Culbertson, director of international business for the Forest2Market timber industry consulting firm.

“I think the owners of the timber came to the conclusion it was more valuable as

ag land,” he said.

Poplar plantations arose in the aftermath of steep logging declines on federal land in the Northwest, when paper companies worried about acquiring sufficient wood chips to run their plants, Culbertson said.

However, the anticipated wood chip shortage never materialized, he said.

Using the trees as biomass for energy production also encountered economic problems, since such feedstocks must necessarily be inexpensive, said Richard Zabel, executive director of the Western Forestry and Conservation Association.

“The price they’re paying for biomass is so low, it’s not worth the time and expense to harvest your trees,” he said.

Since transporting cheap wood chips over long distances is financially unfeasible, pulpwood producers are dependent on the fortunes and demand of nearby mills, Zabel said.

“You need someone close by who’s going to buy it,” he said. “That’s always been the weak link. You just can’t afford to haul it very far.”

BRIEFLY

Medford man gets life in prison for girlfriend’s death

MEDFORD — A Medford man has been sentenced to life in prison for shooting his girlfriend to death in the bedroom of their apartment.

The *Mail Tribune* reported Monday that Jesse Aaron Allen was sentenced Friday after pleading guilty to murder in Jackson County Circuit Court.

Prosecutors say the 22-year-old fired four gunshots at his girlfriend, Kaylynn Klosterman, on Sept. 14, 2018, after they argued about conversations Klosterman had been having with a male co-worker.

Allen fled and was arrested at his mother’s home the following day.

The newspaper reports Allen told detectives he dumped the gun in the Rogue River and made a full confession.

Allen will not be eligible for parole until he serves at least 25 years.

Teen taking senior photos struck, killed by train

TROUTDALE — Authorities say a teenage boy was hit and killed by a train as he was taking his senior photos.

The Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office says deputies were called out to the tracks the Union Pacific train was on near the Columbia River Highway in Troutdale around 6 p.m. Saturday.

KOIN reported the 17-year-old student was declared dead at the scene. The Medical Examiner’s Office has not released the identity of the student.

Union Pacific said none of the crew members were hurt.

The railroad said its thoughts were with the boy’s family and friends and it pleads with “parents, students and photographers to not take photos on or near the tracks.”

— Associated Press

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