

Removing Snake River dams would cost economy, environment

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**
Capital Press

PORTLAND — A new study finds that the costs to farmers and the region’s economy if the four dams on the lower Snake River were removed would average roughly \$76 million a year.

That equals as much as \$2.3 billion over the next 30 years, according to the study, which was commissioned by the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association.

Some of the estimated costs and in the form of higher expenses for farmers and others would be for building and maintaining roads, railroad facilities and storage facilities. The overall impact on the region’s economy is also factored in.

“Rather than an opinion poll, this study relies on existing data,” association executive director Kristin Meira told the *Capital Press*.

The association commissioned economic consultants FCS Group to develop the study to offset misinformation about the value of the Ice Harbor, Lower Monumental, Little Goose and Lower Granite dams to the region’s economy.

The association wanted to provide a full picture of the impacts that would be felt if the dams were removed, particularly in the transportation sector, Meira said.

The study doesn’t include the cost of breaching the dams.

Information in the study comes from government agencies, commodity commissions and ports.

“We don’t create new data



AP Photo, File

The Lower Granite Dam on the Snake River near Pomeroy, Wash.

here,” Meira said. “We simply evaluate the data and determine what it means for the Northwest if the dams were to be removed. ... This is actual data with regard to the value of commodities that move and how much transportation costs.”

According to the study:
• Removing the Snake River locks would cause diesel fuel consumption to increase by nearly 5 million gallons per year as barges

were replaced by less efficient trucks and railroads. Carbon emissions would increase by more than 1.2 million tons a year, the equivalent of putting 181,889 more passenger cars on the road.

• Transportation and storage costs for wheat, the dominant crop in the region, would likely increase from 40 cents per bushel to 60 to 80 cents per bushel with dam breaching, according to the study. That would cost the region’s farm-

ers an additional \$18.9 million to \$38.8 million a year.

• Expansion and maintenance of highways, railroads and grain elevators would cost more than \$1.6 billion. At least 201 additional unit trains and 23.8 million miles of additional trucking would be needed annually.

Barges produce fewer emissions than any other form of cargo transportation, Meira said. The association found the carbon impacts of

shifting to trucks and rail “pretty stark.”

“It’s hard to picture being concerned with climate change and being in favor of dam breaching — they just don’t go together,” she said.

Idaho Wheat Commission board member Joseph Anderson, of Genesee, said in a statement that he would share the study’s results during a workshop in Clarkston, Washington.

The public can comment until Jan. 24 on a draft stakeholder report on dam breaching funded by Washington Gov. Jay Inslee’s office and the Legislature.

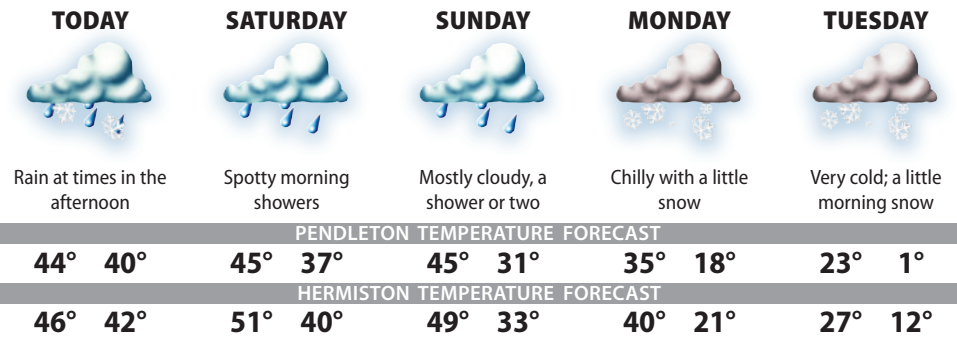
“As this study shows, the Snake River dam system is the most efficient option for transporting goods, such as wheat, generating renewable energy via hydropower and preventing flooding in the Pacific Northwest,” Anderson said. “While removing or breaching the Snake River dams will not increase salmon numbers with any certainty, there would definitely be negative impacts on people, including growers.”

The waterways association’s report will be part of the information provided to the governor along with the stakeholder report, said Tara Lee, deputy director of communications for Inslee’s office.

Meira said the association hasn’t found any upside to removing the dams, either environment, transportation efficiency or safety.

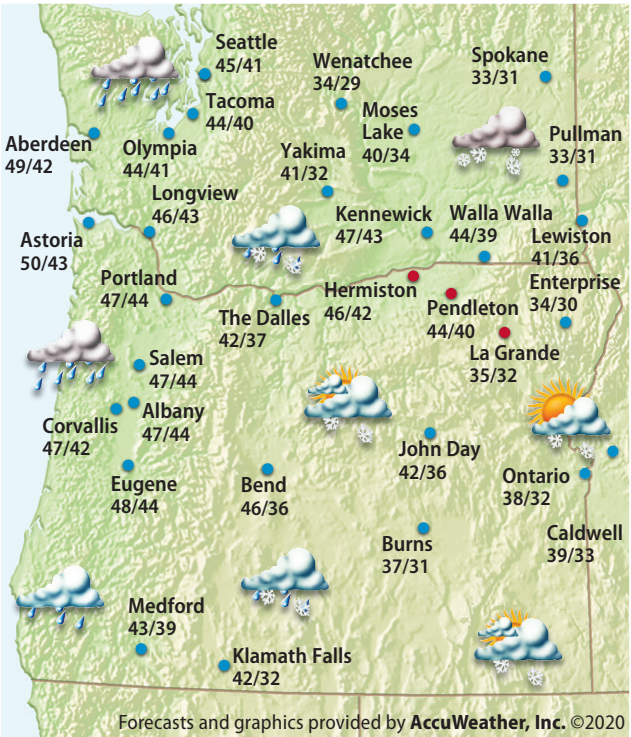
“We haven’t identified any net benefit to removing the dams,” she said.

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OREGON FORECAST

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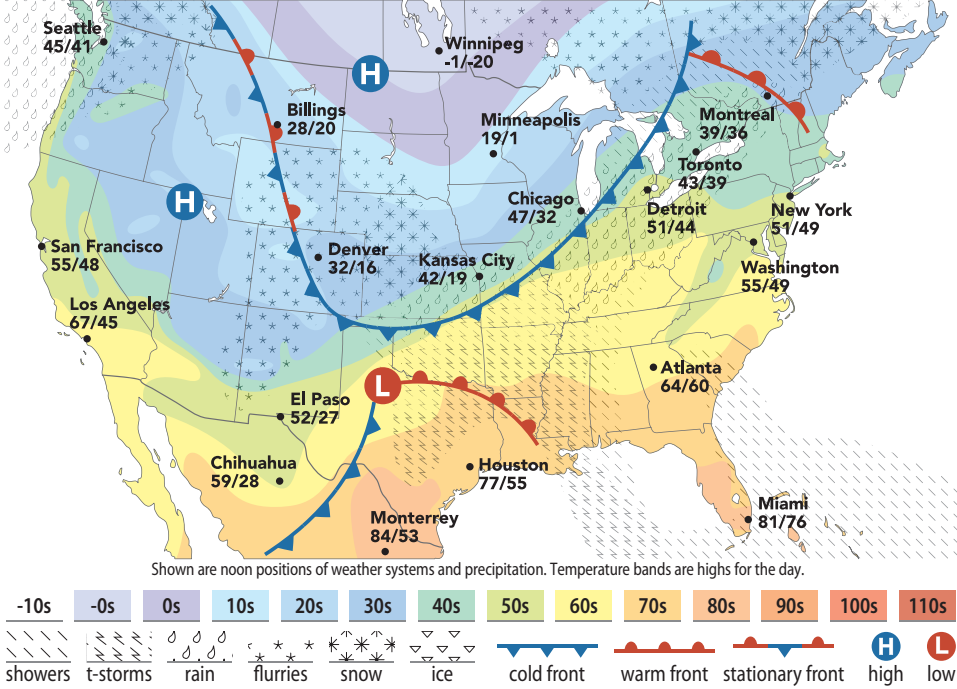
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NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Federal judge throws out Oregon Sen. Brian Boquist’s lawsuit

Lawsuit alleged senate president and others violated the senator’s rights

By **JAKE THOMAS**
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — A federal judge compared state Sen. Brian Boquist to the actor Clint Eastwood and a playground bully Tuesday in dismissing the Dallas Republican’s claims that Senate President Peter Courtney and others attempted to silence him and otherwise abused their power.

Boquist, representing himself, sued in July after last year’s contentious legislative session. He acted after the bipartisan Senate Special Committee on Conduct unanimously decided the senator would have to give 12-hour notice to Oregon State Police before entering the Capitol building over comments he made that were perceived to be threatening.

During the legislative session, Boquist was one of 11 Republican state senators who walked out of the Senate to deny majority Democrats a quorum needed to pass a controversial carbon bill. Gov. Kate Brown said she would use her constitutional authority to send state police to bring the Republicans back.

In response, Boquist addressed Courtney during a Senate session: “If you send the state police to get me, hell’s coming to visit you personally.”

Later that day, he told a KGW reporter that if police come to get him

they’d better “send back- elors and come heavily armed. I’m not going to be a political prisoner in the state of Oregon. It’s just that simple.”

Boquist’s comments drew national attention and a private attorney hired by legislative leaders recommended he not be allowed back in the Capitol because he was perceived by employees as a threat.

Boquist claimed in his federal complaint that his First Amendment rights were violated and that his remarks regarding “hell” were religious.

However, U.S. District Court Judge Michael McShane found otherwise. “These statements, apart and together, resonate more as threats than the expression of theological ideas,” McShane wrote in his Jan. 7 order.

In withering terms, McShane wrote that Boquist’s words were “those of a bully on the playground” and that the senator had been disciplined for perceived threats, not political viewpoints. The judge said Boquist “seems to overlook the fact that he sounds more like a character out of a Clint Eastwood movie than he does Mother Teresa.”

McShane added, “Words, it turns out, sometimes have consequences.”

Besides Courtney, Boquist sued state Sens. James Manning and Floyd Prozanski, Democratic members of the Senate conduct committee, legislative staffers and the private attorney hired to investigate his conduct.

Boquist claimed in his

complaint that the defendants conspired to block his access to the Capitol and denied his access to “ongoing secret political investigations.” He also likened the call to arrest fleeing Republican legislators to fascist Germany and the Soviet Union.

His lawsuit asked the judge to acknowledge that his rights had been violated and for unfettered access to the Capitol, recognition of senators’ rights to free speech and due process. He also asked for court fees and costs.

McShane dismissed the claims against legislative employees and the outside attorney, writing that they were “only tangentially involved.”

The judge found Boquist failed to make the case that a secret investigation violated his rights. The judge also disagreed that Boquist had been denied due process, noting the senator hadn’t been arrested and the fine was returned. Finally, McShane wrote that Boquist cited a federal law concerning Native American tribes for his claims of abuse of office, which didn’t apply.

McShane dismissed the case “with prejudice,” meaning it can’t be refilled.

Courtney’s office declined to comment.

Boquist has a separate case pending in Marion County Circuit Court over a dispute over state records he said he has been denied.

Boquist said he was reviewing the judge’s order and was considering submitting his claims as a tort against the state.

“We will wait and see,” he said.

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