

Court ruling could green light contested energy projects

By JAKE THOMAS
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Two controversial energy projects in the Columbia River Gorge area could move forward as the result of a ruling by the Oregon Supreme Court.

The court's ruling on Jan. 15 concerns administrative rules adopted in 2018 by the state Energy Facilities Siting Council, which oversees and imposes conditions on the construction and operation of large energy projects. The rules would have changed the process for the certification of energy sites and drew a challenge by conservation group Friends of the Columbia Gorge.

Last year, the court determined that the rules were invalid after Friends of the Columbia Gorge argued the council didn't follow the right procedures in adopting them. In response, the council adopted nearly identical rules but on a temporary basis.

Friends of the Columbia Gorge, joined by other conservation groups, again challenged the rules. But the court found the state could legally adopt the rules on a temporary basis.

Nathan Baker, staff attorney for Friends of the



Turbines spin at a large wind farm launched more than a decade ago in Sherman County in north-central Oregon. Other projects would bring more turbines to Eastern Oregon if approved.

Columbia Gorge, said his group's primary concern was that the way the rules were adopted shut out the public and made it difficult for citizens to participate.

"That's never a good thing," he said. "There needs to be transparency and an open public process."

He said the temporary rules were used to advance two controversial proj-

ects that have drawn hundreds of public comments in opposition. He said the state authorization for both projects were issued years ago and would have expired if not for amendments allowed under the contested rules.

One project affected is the Summit Ridge Wind Project, proposed for a site 14 miles southeast of The

Dalles in Wasco County. According to the state council's website, the project would include 72 wind turbines that would have a peak generating capacity of 194 megawatts that would be sold to the Bonneville Power Administration.

Friends of the Columbia Gorge contended the project would impair views along the lower Deschutes

River and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, in addition to harming bald and golden eagles.

The state council certified the project in 2011. LotusWorks, the Vancouver-based company behind it, has been granted multiple amendments to its certification.

The second is the Perennial Wind Chaser Station, a natural gas facility that would produce up to 415 megawatts of electrical power on approximately 20 acres in Umatilla County, according to the council's website. According to its application, the facility would be used to compensate for when wind energy can't meet demand for electricity.

Baker said there were concerns that the natural gas facility would pollute air in the gorge. Representatives for the project could not be reached for comment.

Both projects need to be completed by 2023. But Baker said there are doubts that the companies are even actively pursuing the projects.

Steven Ostrowski, the president of LotusWorks, said he wasn't aware of the court ruling and declined to

comment. Asked if the project was moving forward, he replied, "We hope so."

Jennifer Kalez, communications director for the Oregon Department of Energy, said in an email there are three other energy facilities currently under review for amendments. The projects, which don't appear to have generated controversy, include two wind farms near Arlington, as well as a transmission line between Eugene and Medford.

The state council will consider making the disputed rules permanent at its meeting in Hood River on Friday, Jan. 24.

A dozen conservation groups, including Friends of the Columbia Gorge, submitted a 22-page letter asking the council to not make the rules permanent, citing concerns that they would conflict with state law and reduce public input.

Baker said the rules would allow staff to decide on project site expansions that should be made by the council. He said his group believes that the rules would conflict with state law and they could draw a third court challenge.

"It all depends on what (the council) does next week," he said.

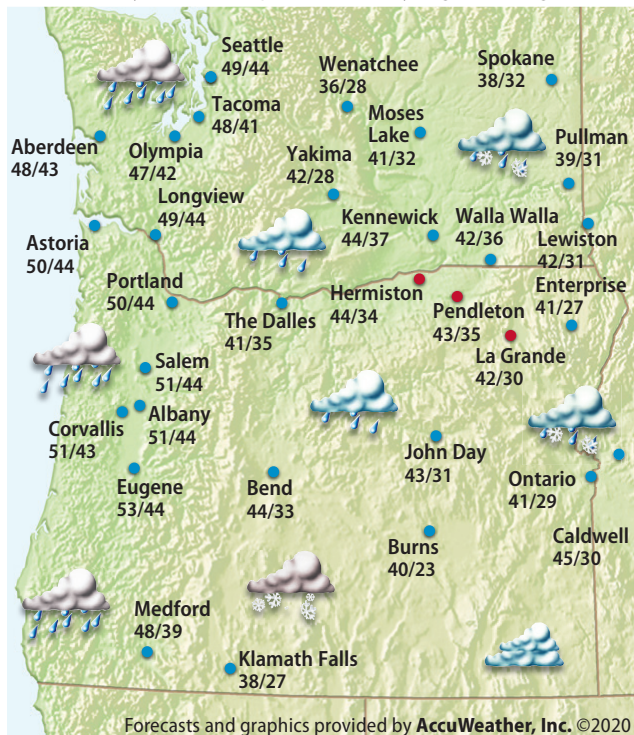
Forecast for Pendleton Area

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TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
A couple of rain or snow showers	A few showers in the afternoon	Cloudy; rain at night	Mostly cloudy	Rather cloudy
PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
43° 35°	44° 41°	54° 44°	55° 40°	53° 42°
HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
44° 34°	45° 40°	53° 43°	56° 41°	55° 43°

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	39°	30°
Normals	42°	28°
Records	67° (1968)	-18° (1930)

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"
Month to date 0.86"
Normal month to date 1.00"
Year to date 0.86"
Last year to date 1.45"
Normal year to date 1.00"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	41°	31°
Normals	42°	29°
Records	60° (2010)	-32° (1930)

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"
Month to date 0.13"
Normal month to date 0.84"
Year to date 0.13"
Last year to date 1.14"
Normal year to date 0.84"

WINDS (in mph)

	Today	Wed.
Boardman	SSW 4-8	S 4-8
Pendleton	S 6-12	S 6-12

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	7:28 a.m.
Sunset tonight	4:45 p.m.
Moonrise today	4:52 a.m.
Moonset today	1:56 p.m.

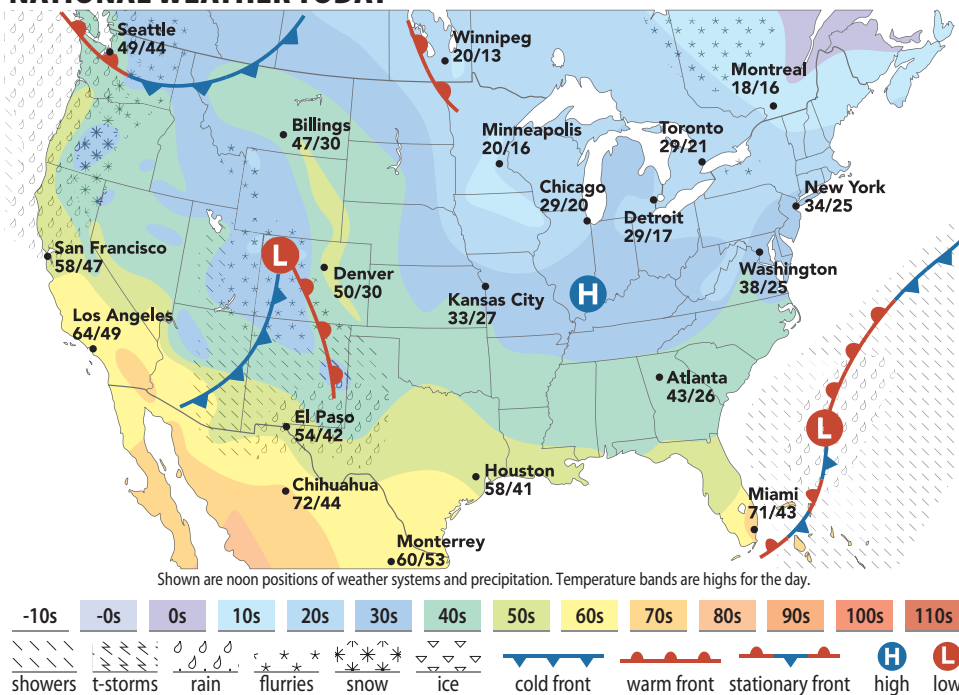
Phases: New, First, Full, Last

New	Jan 24
First	Feb 1
Full	Feb 8
Last	Feb 15

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 77° in Hollywood, Fla. Low -30° in International Falls, Minn.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Report: Oregon marijuana sales are 420% stronger near Idaho

Associated Press

PORTLAND — Marijuana sales in Oregon along the Idaho state line are 420% the statewide average, according to a state report.

Idaho residents are purchasing recreational marijuana in Oregon because it is illegal in Idaho, the report released Friday by the Oregon Office of Economic Analysis said.

The report also showed stronger marijuana sales for Washington along its border with Idaho in 2019 than along its borders with Oregon or Canada.

"The sales in counties

along the Idaho border were much stronger than I anticipated," analyzer Josh Lehner said. "Obviously, recreational marijuana is not legal in Idaho, but even after throwing the data into a rough border tax model that accounts for incomes, number of retailers, tax rates and the like, there remains a huge border effect."

A border effect occurs when two neighboring jurisdictions have different rules prompting residents to travel to nearby regions to take advantage of the different regulations, experts said.

The report found about

75% of Oregon sales and about 35% of Washington sales in counties along the Idaho border were caused by the border effect.

Idaho borders three states that have legalized recreational marijuana sales including Oregon, Washington and Nevada, officials said.

Advocates for legalizing medical marijuana have started collecting signatures to get an initiative on the general election ballot, the *Idaho Statesman* reported.

The number 420 is a colloquial term referencing marijuana or cannabis consumption.

BRIEFLY

Chiloquin man arrested following shooting, house fire that closed Highway 97

KLAMATH FALLS — A Chiloquin man is in custody after a prolonged standoff in which Klamath County Sheriff's Office deputies were shot at and a home set on fire, according to a sheriff's office news release.

Steven Earl White, 55, is being held at the Klamath County Jail.

At approximately 1:30 p.m. Sunday, Klamath County Sheriff's Office deputies responded to a call of shots fired in a residence on U.S. Highway 97 near Chiloquin, about 100 miles south of Bend. Upon arrival, deputies were fired upon by a subject inside the residence.

Deputies made several unsuccessful attempts to encourage the suspect to give himself up, and at approximately 9:30 p.m. deputies prepared to make entry into the residence in order to take the subject into custody. The subject had started a fire in the residence in an attempt to evade arrest. White was arrested and is being held at the Klamath County Jail.

Law enforcement officers from Klamath Falls Police Department, Oregon State Police and the U.S. Forest Service assisted Klamath County Sheriff's Office in taking White into custody. There were no injuries suffered by

responders or White and light damage to one KCSO patrol vehicle when it came under fire from the suspect.

Grand jury charges SOU hall-of-famer in Ashland poaching case

ASHLAND — A Southern Oregon University football Hall of Famer who had a brief career in the NFL will face a felony charge for an alleged deer poaching within Ashland city limits in which a bullet struck a house.

A grand jury charged Dustin "Dusty" McGrorty, 38, of Riddle, with a felony charge of unlawful use of a weapon and misdemeanor poaching and trespassing crimes surrounding the taking of a "4x4" trophy-class buck last fall, according to documents filed earlier this week in Jackson County Circuit Court.

McGrorty allegedly fired a round from the seat of his truck while the animal was sleeping underneath a large bush near a house, according to an Oregon State Police press release issued days after the Oct. 16, 2019, shooting. After the gunshot passed through the animal, the bullet hit a home near its front door.

McGrorty briefly went pro after his time at SOU, according to the Hall of Fame, after he signed a free agent contract with the St. Louis Rams.

— EO Media Group

CORRECTION: In the Page A1 story "Vintage Discovery," published Thursday, Jan. 16, Sandra J. Parker should have been credited as the person who started the Parker House bed-and-breakfast at 311 N. Main in 1994. The B&B is now known as the Pendleton House.

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