

# Bovine manure tax credit encounters opposition

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI  
Capital Press

SALEM — A proposal to extend Oregon's tax credit for collecting cow manure for energy has come under fire from critics who say it's mostly beneficial to large dairies.

The tax credit of \$3.50 per wet ton of bovine manure collected is intended to promote the construction of methane digesters that produce renewable energy. It's slated to end in 2022.

Senate Bill 151, which would change the sunset date to 2028, is supported by the Oregon Farm Bureau and Oregon Dairy Farmers Association.

"Manure digesters provide very clear environmental, renewable energy, and economic benefits to the dairy industry and the public," the groups said in written testimony.

Oregon currently has three methane digesters in operation, one of which annually sequesters 136,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide — the amount emitted by about 29,000 cars, the groups said.

Extending the tax credit helps ensure these digesters will remain online and may encourage others to invest in the technology, the letter said.



EO Media Group, File

**A methane digester collects gas from decomposing cow manure at a dairy and uses it as fuel to generate electricity. Oregon lawmakers are considering a bill to extend a tax credit for collecting cow manure until 2028 rather than have it lapse next year.**

However, critics of the tax credit claim it amounts to a subsidy for the largest "confined animal feeding operations," or CAFOs, in the state.

The biggest benefactor of the tax credit is a dairy with 70,000 cows, and digesters are only economically feasible for facilities with well over 500

cows, said Amy Van Saun, an attorney with the Stand Up to Factory Farms Coalition, which opposes major CAFOs.

The bill creates a "perverse incentive" to continue siting major CAFOs in Oregon at the expense of rural communities, she said.

At best, such digesters only capture the added meth-

ane generated by the development of factory farm systems, Van Saun said.

CAFOs should be required to trap their emissions if they choose to raise animals in this manner, rather than be paid for it by the public, said Amy Wong, policy director of the Friends of Family Farmers nonprofit.

Natural gas from factory farms is not "truly clean energy" and the state government should instead encourage pasture-based farming and technologies, such as wind and solar electricity, Wong said.

"Oregon should not use public dollars to support large, private corporations

at a time Oregon is facing a budget shortfall," she said.

The Oregon Center for Public Policy, which advocates for "inclusive economic policies" for workers, also opposes SB 151 because the tax credit costs the state \$5.5 million per biennium that could be invested in more valuable projects and services.

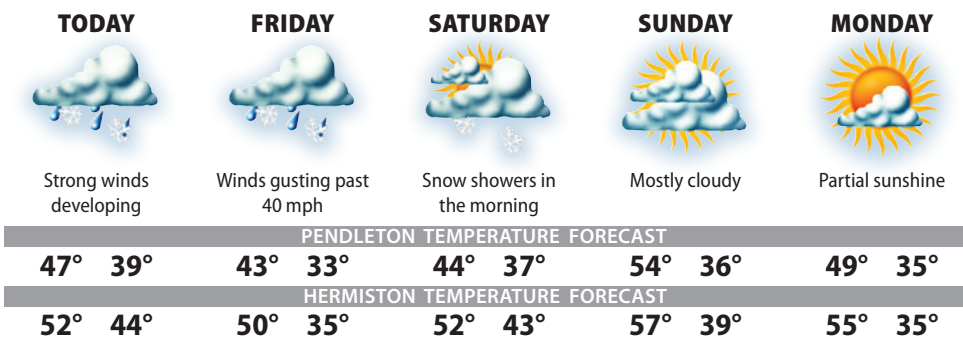
The bovine manure tax credit was originally included in a broader tax credit for biomass energy created in 2007, but it was renewed as a standalone tax credit in 2017, said Kyle Easton, an economist with the Legislative Revenue Office.

In recent years, most of the financial benefit from the tax credit has gone to four companies, he said. "There is a concentration in a few of the entities that are receiving this credit."

Knowing that such a tax credit will continue to exist can help digester investments "pencil out" financially for companies that may not otherwise be able to afford them, he said.

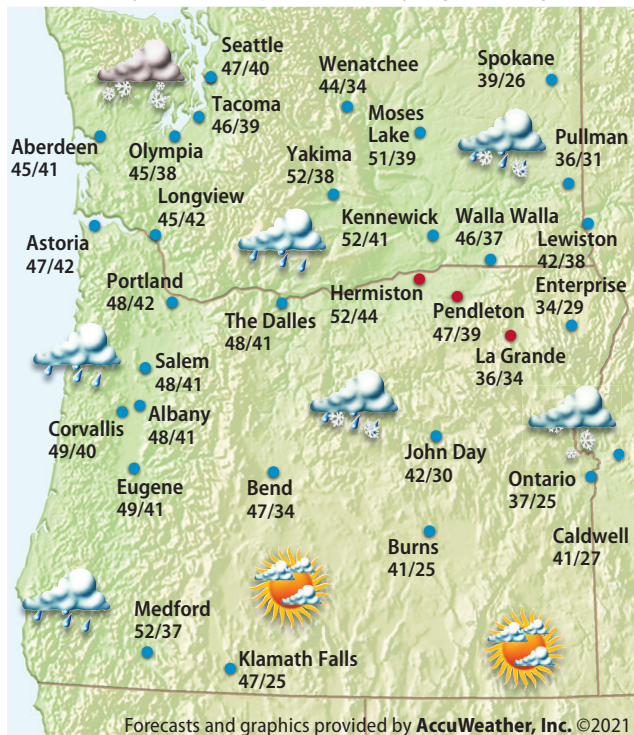
Economic studies have indicated size is an important consideration in investing in digester technology, Easton said. "The larger the herd, the more financial sense it makes for the farm to have an on-farm digester."

## 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	44°	30°
Normals	49°	31°
Records	72° (1986)	10° (1993)

**PRECIPITATION**  
24 hours ending 3 p.m. — Trace  
Month to date — 2.08"  
Normal month to date — 0.98"  
Year to date — 2.99"  
Last year to date — 4.06"  
Normal year to date — 2.36"

**HERMISTON** through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	49°	29°
Normals	51°	30°
Records	67° (1964)	15° (2005)

**PRECIPITATION**  
24 hours ending 3 p.m. — 0.00"  
Month to date — 0.49"  
Normal month to date — 0.82"  
Year to date — 1.08"  
Last year to date — 0.36"  
Normal year to date — 2.10"

**WINDS** (in mph)

Today	Fri.
Boardman WSW 15-25	WSW 15-25
Pendleton WSW 15-25	W 25-35

**SUN AND MOON**

Sunrise today	6:41 a.m.
Sunset tonight	5:36 p.m.
Moonrise today	3:45 p.m.
Moonset today	6:16 a.m.

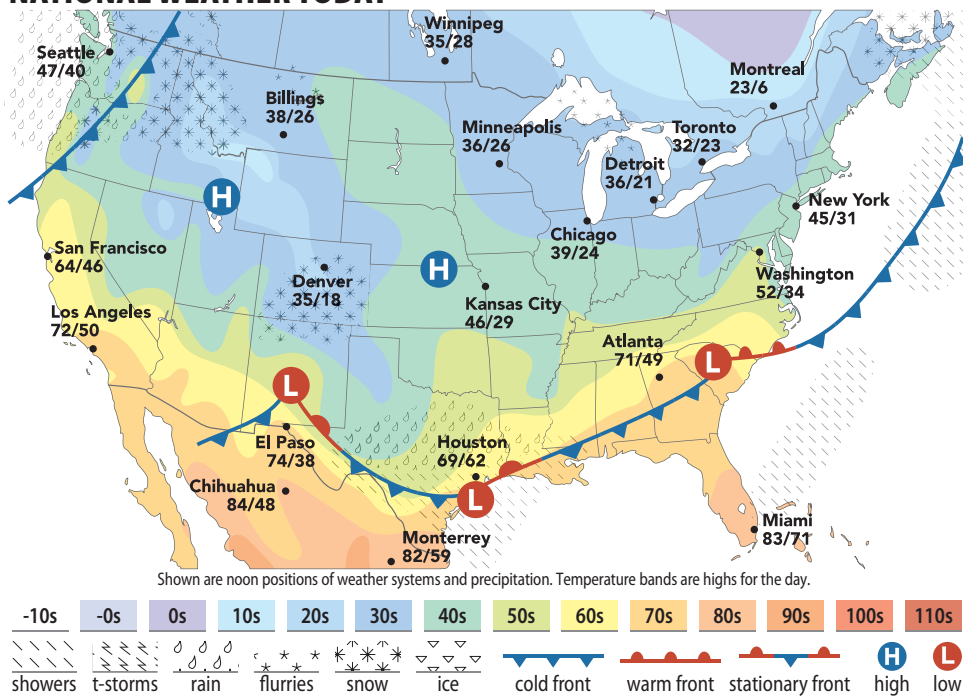
Full Feb 27, Last Mar 5, New Mar 13, First Mar 21

## NATIONAL EXTREMES

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

High 93° in Kingsville, Texas Low -15° in Daniel, Wyo.

## NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



# Oregon Legislature wants its day in court for redistricting

By GARY A. WARNER  
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Democrats and Republicans in the Oregon Legislature are uniting to reset the clock on delays that would cut them out of drawing political maps for the 2022 election.

Citing the overwhelming challenge of counting heads during the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Census Bureau says the data due April 1 won't arrive until Sept. 30 — six months late.

"We are going to blow by all the deadlines at this point," said Rep. Andrea Salinas, D-Lake Oswego, chair of the House Redistricting Committee, at a press call on Monday, Feb. 22.

Legislators want the courts to reset the clock, saying the extraordinary U.S. Census delay shouldn't take away their rightful job of drawing lines for 60 House, 30 Senate and up to six congressional seats.

In an extremely abnormal year, the normal course of events prescribed in the state constitution and law can't happen. Oregon is not alone in this mess. The National Conference of State Legislatures reports the Sept. 30 data delivery could upend the process in at least 26 states.

In Oregon, the timeline is supposed to begin with the U.S. Census every 10 years. The block-by-block data is sent to states by April 1 the following year. The Legislature draws the maps and sends them to the governor for approval by the time they adjourn on July 1. If political stalemate gets in the way, the secretary of state redraws the legislative maps by Aug. 15. A special five-judge panel draws the congressional maps. The new lines are then used in legislative and congressional races the following year. For this cycle, they would first be used in May 2022 primaries.

All the deadline dates will be long gone by the time the

Census gets the numbers to Oregon.

The mess now looks headed to the Oregon Supreme Court. Lawmakers in both parties have approved using the legislative counsel to explore legal options.

Salinas said a best case scenario would be for the court to rule the Legislature has 60 days from when it received the census data to draw the maps and get them to the governor.

House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, said the option was possible even though the Legislature must adjourn its regular session on July 1.

"We'd have a special session," she said.

Salinas said the worst case scenario is the courts deciding political boundaries.

Democrats have supermajorities in both chambers of the Legislature. Gov. Kate Brown and Secretary of State Shemia Fagan are both Democrats.

## IN BRIEF

### Plan to move Oregon-Idaho border leaps ahead with Malheur County ballot measure

VALE — Malheur County voters will face a ballot measure in May linked to the movement to shift a number of rural Oregon counties into Idaho.

The measure would require the Malheur County Court to meet three times a year to consider a plan to move the Oregon-Idaho border.

Proponents of Measure 52-64 acquired enough signatures by Feb. 17 to put it on the May 18 special election ballot, said Gail Trotter, Malheur County clerk.

The measure needed 539 signatures, and Trotter said her office was able to validate 563. The signatures were submitted in two batches, on Jan. 26 and Feb. 11, said Trotter.

Voter approval would require the county court to meet and discuss "how to promote the interests of Malheur County in any negotiations, regarding the relocation of the Oregon-Idaho border."

The measure is backed by the group Greater Idaho, a nonprofit that consists of residents from across Eastern, Central and Southern Oregon. The goal of the group is to slice off 18 counties and incorporate them into Idaho.

If voters approve the measure in the counties, the issue would then go to the Oregon Legislature for further review. If the Legislature agreed to the plan, the border boundary change would require approval from Congress.

Similar measures will be on the May ballot in Lake, Sherman, Baker and Grant counties.

In November, voters in Jefferson and Union counties approved measures pushing their leaders to meet about the boundary change.

Mike McCarter, a La Pine resident and president of Greater Idaho, said his organization also is coming to put measures before voters this coming November in Harney, Morrow, Umatilla, Josephine, Jackson, Klamath and Curry counties.

— Malheur Enterprise

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