

# Sweeping plan aims to wean Oregonians from fossil fuels

Consumers face escalating costs in fuel, energy bills if suppliers can't meet regulations

By TED SICKINGER  
The Oregonian

SALEM — Policymakers for the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality on Thursday, Dec. 16, voted 4 to 1 to adopt a controversial Climate Protection Plan that would eventually have far reaching impacts on every resident of the state.

Depending on who's describing it, the plan is either an unachievable economic debacle in the making or a long overdue and measured response to climate change that may not go far enough. If that sounds familiar, it's because Oregon's debate over climate policy has featured the same polarized rhetoric for the last five years and more.

The new plan was developed by the Department of Environmental Quality after Republican walkouts in 2019 and 2020 killed efforts to pass economywide cap and trade legislation. The governor responded with an executive order directing agencies to develop plans to regulate and reduce greenhouse gas

emissions in the state. It requires fuel suppliers to reduce greenhouse emissions from the products they sell by 50% by 2035 and 90% by 2050 — even more aggressive than the state's overall goals. Some 13 industrial facilities also will be required to reduce their emissions consistent with the best and most cost-effective technology, with aggregate emission reductions targeted at half of today's levels by 2035.

The plan doesn't prescribe a way to achieve those reductions or mandate the use of any type of fuel or technology, such as biodiesel or electric cars and trucks. It simply sets up a regulatory backstop in which DEQ will establish a declining limit on emissions from fuels covered by the program. Suppliers who can't meet them will face escalating costs, which will be passed through to consumers at the pump, in their monthly utility bills and in the cost of goods they buy.

The program covers all fossil fuel suppliers, including diesel, gasoline, natural gas, and propane used in transportation, residential, commercial and industrial settings. Bottom line: It will force Oregonians to eventually slash their use, switch to alternatives or pay



Daniel Acker/Bloomberg, File

The Oregon Environmental Quality Commission on Thursday, Dec. 16, 2021, adopted a sweeping Climate Protection Plan that calls for aggressive reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

significantly higher prices to continue burning them.

The Environmental Quality Commission — the five-person DEQ policy board — adopted the program at a special meeting Dec. 16. The roll-out will begin early next year, though any financial impacts to consumers likely would take years before being felt.

It's an ambitious program, particularly with today's limited availability of biofuels, electric trucks, charging stations and alternatives to natural gas. Unsurprisingly, it's subject to the same controversy that killed climate legislation

the past two years.

The Climate Protection Plan is a downsized version of that stalled legislation. It doesn't apply to the electric utility sector, where emissions reductions are being targeted under another piece of legislation passed this year. And it's not designed to link with other states' programs, such as California's cap and trade system. But it relies on similar mechanisms and is aimed at sectors that account for about half of greenhouse emissions in the state, according to DEQ staff.

Trade associations for regulated businesses believe the reductions are unachiev-

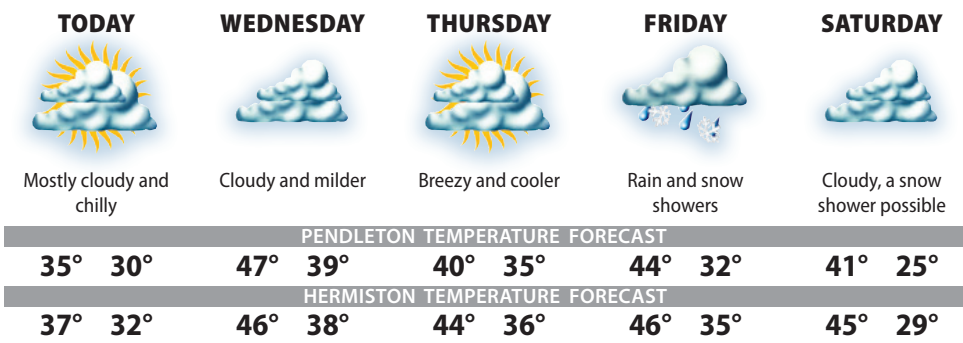
able and warn the paucity of alternative means to comply may eventually lead to fuel rationing. They say the lack of a cost cap will lead to steep price increases that would undercut their competitiveness, forcing some manufacturers to move or cut jobs. They decry what they describe as an 11th hour move by the agency to make the rules even more stringent, after they had been put out for public comment this fall. And they suggest a legal challenge is likely.

"I don't think it's well understood how this program is going to impact people across the state, said Sharla Moffett, a policy

director at the state's largest business association, Oregon Business & Industry. "The timing of it, with the inflation we're seeing and the pressures on the transportation sector, presents a lot more challenges that we're going to face."

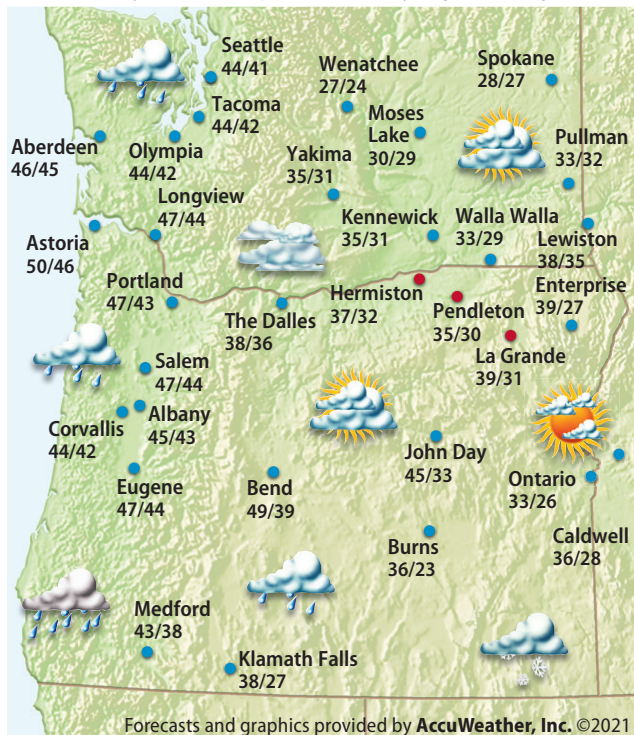
Environmental groups, meanwhile, are deeply frustrated with the Legislature's inaction on transportation emissions. They say the planet is facing a climate cliff, and the program's hard and declining cap is what's required to move the emissions needle and transition businesses and consumers to lower-carbon alternatives over the coming decades.

## Forecast for Pendleton Area



## OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



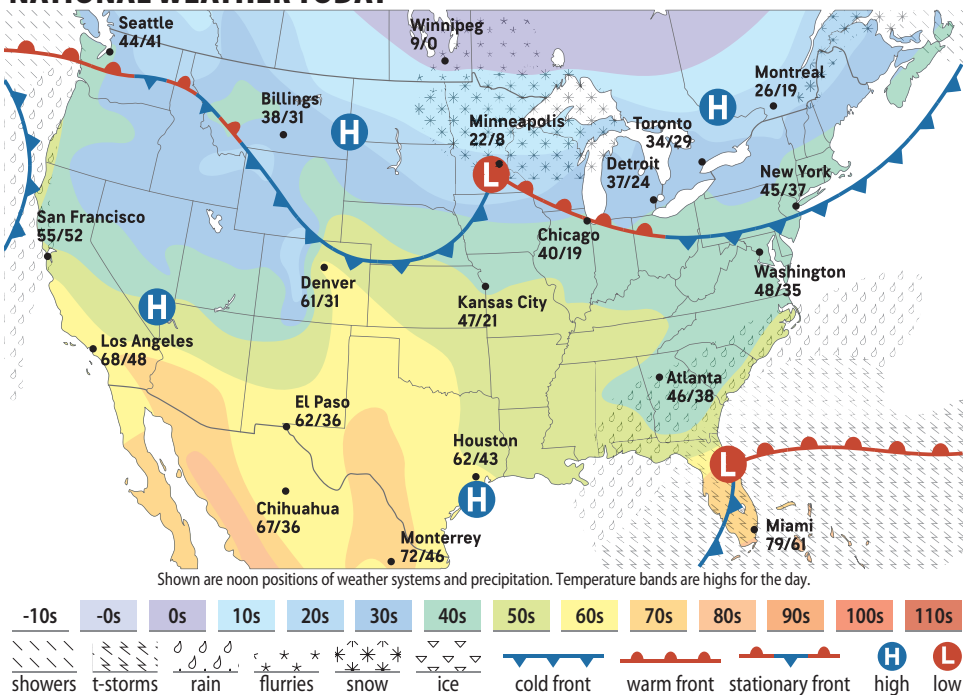
## ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	30°	27°	
Normals	40°	28°	
Records	66° (1900)	-12° (1990)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.47"		
Month to date	1.51"		
Normal month to date	0.95"		
Year to date	8.89"		
Last year to date	12.69"		
Normal year to date	12.68"		
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	33°	30°	
Normals	41°	28°	
Records	66° (2019)	-12° (1990)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.47"		
Month to date	1.52"		
Normal month to date	0.68"		
Year to date	6.59"		
Last year to date	4.18"		
Normal year to date	8.20"		
WINDS (in mph)			
Today	Wed.		
Boardman	SSE 3-6	SW 4-8	
Pendleton	NNW 4-8	S 7-14	
SUN AND MOON			
Sunrise today	7:33 a.m.		
Sunset tonight	4:14 p.m.		
Moonrise today	6:26 p.m.		
Moonset today	9:49 a.m.		
Last New First Full			
Dec 26	Jan 2	Jan 9	Jan 17

## NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)  
High 85° in Vero Beach, Fla. Low -14° in Bottineau, N.D.

## NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



## Newly formed committee to review four books causing stir in Walla Walla schools

By JEREMY BURNHAM  
Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

WALLA-WALLA — Book censorship was a hot topic during the public comment session of the Dec. 14 Walla Walla School Board meeting.

Several current and former students of Walla Walla High School spoke out against censorship at the meeting.

A few members of the public also spoke against a few books in the Wa-Hi library.

The subject arose after a video by two women calling themselves For Our Kids WW was posted to social media. The women, who don't provide their names, claimed that a book, "Gender Queer," by Maia Kobabe, was removed from the Walla Walla High School library's circulation after they complained about it.

But as of yet, no book has been permanently banned, Superintendent Wade Smith emphasized Wednesday, Dec. 15.

Smith added the book was never in circulation to begin with.

While "Gender Queer" was ordered by the district

for use at the library, it hadn't yet made the shelves before the district received a complaint about it, Smith said.

"It was still in a box," Smith said. "We had to open a box just to find it."

Smith said the book is one of four that was submitted for review by members of the public this year. He said this is the first time in his seven years with the district that any book has been submitted for review by the public.

Of the four books, "Gender Queer" was the only one not in circulation at the time of the objection. It will be held out of circulation until after the review process takes place in January.

The other three books will remain in circulation during review.

The review process for "The Hate U Give," by Angie Thomas, and "All Boys Aren't Blue," by George M. Johnson, concluded on Wednesday, Dec. 15.

Meanwhile, "Gender Queer," along with "The Bluest Eye," by Toni Morrison, will be reviewed in January.

When the district started

receiving complaints about books, a committee was formed to reconsider titles using the district's criteria, Smith said.

This criteria is outlined in the district's Policy No. 2021 and includes considerations such as appropriate reading level and currency of the material.

The committee consists of faculty, librarians, principals, members of the district's equity department and three high school student representatives, Smith said.

While he was concerned that misinformation seemingly led many people to believe that "Gender Queer" had been banned at the library by the district, Smith said he was proud to see students speak up for something they feel strongly about.

"Last night was a time we can all celebrate the incredible kids we have here, and how eloquently and thoughtfully they articulated their viewpoints," Smith said.

Walla Walla Public School's policy on its book-review process can be found online at ubne.ws/wpps2021.

## IN BRIEF

### OSP searches unlicensed marijuana dispensary

UNION COUNTY — The Oregon State Police Drug Enforcement Section recently conducted a search on an unlicensed marijuana dispensary in Union County.

On Thursday, Dec. 16, OSP and other law enforcement served a search warrant at Highway 30 Cannabis on Adams Avenue in La Grande after receiving tips about unlawful distribution of marijuana products at the store. Law enforcement also served a secondary search at a storefront operation on Stackland Road in Cove.

Through a long-term investigation, law

enforcement reported Highway 30 was not operating as a licensed dispensary through the state of Oregon and was reportedly distributing marijuana unlawfully. Investigators sought a warrant for unlawful possession of marijuana, unlawful manufacturer of marijuana items, unlawful delivery of marijuana items, laundering a monetary instrument and engaging in a financial transaction in property from unlawful activity.

During the search, law enforcement seized evidence from the locations and made no arrests, according to the press release, but arrests and charges are to be expected in the near future.

— EO Media Group

**CORRECTIONS:** The East Oregonian works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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