

# Questions about taxes, tobacco and guns on local ballots

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SALEM — Voters in three more Oregon counties vote Tuesday, May 17, to indicate whether they want to become Idaho residents without leaving their homes.

Questions about the “Greater Idaho” movement are on ballots in Douglas, Josephine and Klamath counties, following approval in eight rural counties, mostly in the southeast part of the state, to push toward redrawing the boundary between Idaho and Oregon.

The measures are among dozens of proposals on Oregon ballots this year.

Even if the measures pass in the three counties, residents wouldn’t become Idahoans anytime soon. Changing state boundaries takes approval from both the state Legislatures and Congress. But Mike McCarter, president of Citizens for Greater Idaho, said each county vote sends lawmakers a message about rural discontent.

“Every county that passes that sends a bigger message to the Oregon Legislature that you have an issue in rural Oregon counties, and they want to see something done about it,” McCarter said. “And if something can’t be done about it, then let them go. Let them become part of the state of Idaho.”

Voters in Baker, Grant, Harney, Jefferson, Lake, Malheur Sherman and Union counties already endorsed the idea, passing variations of ballot measures that require county commissioners to regularly discuss changing state borders. The proposed Klamath County measure would result in that county joining those conversations, while the Douglas County proposal would allow county commissioners to pay lobbyists or authorize county staff to lobby state and federal officials to change the state boundaries.



Oregon voters in the election Tuesday, May 17, 2022, weigh in on issues including whether to change Oregon’s boundary with Idaho, whether to repeal tobacco regulations and how much money neighborhood schools should receive.

Josephine County’s ballot measure, referred by county commissioners, asks whether Josephine and other rural counties should separate from Oregon and become part of Idaho. Commissioners intend to use the results as a guide as they develop policy.

The three measures aiming to show support for changing state boundaries are among dozens of decisions on local ballots. Voters across Oregon aren’t only selecting candidates this spring but directly deciding whether to enact or reject laws and taxes.

### New policies

In Josephine County, voters will decide whether to repeal a 2021 ordinance that would let the county planning director inspect property believed to contain an illegal marijuana farm and issue civil fines along with referring findings for

criminal prosecution. The ordinance never took effect because voters referred it to the ballot.

Supporters of the ballot measure repealing the 2021 law, including state Sen. Art Robinson, R-Cave Junction, argue that letting the ordinance take effect will give government officials free range to violate property rights. Opponents of the ordinance gave Josephine County another tool to combat flourishing cartelfunded marijuana farms.

Tualatin is considering a change to term limit laws that would allow Mayor Frank Bubenik to run for a second term. The 27,000-population city now limits city councilors or mayors to no more than 12 years in a 20-year period, and a charter change proposed to voters would allow someone who served two terms as a city councilor to also serve two consecutive

terms as mayor. Bubenik was elected mayor in 2018 after two terms on the city council.

Sublimity, a city of about 3,100 east of Salem, is asking voters whether it should continue including fluoride in its drinking water, which it has done since 1955.

Shaniko, a Wasco County city with 35 residents that describes itself as a ghost town, is asking its few voters to allow the elected city recorder to live outside city limits. The recorder doesn’t vote on city issues.

Tillamook County is considering an ordinance that would bar county officials from following or enforcing most gun control laws. Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum last year sued two other counties that have adopted so-called Second Amendment Sanctuary Ordinances.

In Washington County, voters will decide whether to repeal a county ordinance that banned flavored

tobacco products, coupons and discounts for tobacco and sales through vending machines or kiosks.

Coos County is considering a 9.5% tax on stays at hotels, motels, campgrounds, vacation rentals and other short-term destinations in part of the county. Under state law, local governments can charge lodging taxes as long as at least 70% of the proceeds are used to promote tourism. Coos County intends to use the rest of the money for public safety and cleaning up trash, including abandoned mobile homes.

### Taxes for schools and public safety

Counties throughout the state are seeking to renew existing local option taxes or pass bond measures, which taxpayers will pay off over the next 20 years. Voters will decide whether to support replacing fire stations, building or repairing schools and pools and keep fire and road districts running.

### Some highlights:

- Corvallis School District: \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value over the next five years, raising a total of \$46 million. Without renewing the tax, the school district estimates it would have to cut its budget 10%, the equivalent of 90 teaching positions.
- North Bend School District: \$22.7 million in bonds, estimated to cost taxpayers \$0.88 per \$1,000 over the next 20 years. The district would remove asbestos, replace windows, repair aging buildings and create a performing arts space.
- South Umpqua School District No. 19: \$20.9 million in bonds, estimated to cost \$1.15 per \$1,000 over the next 30 years. It would build a new K-8 school in Canyonville and create safety vestibules at two elementary schools.
- Roseburg School District:

\$154 million in bonds to replace the old main building at Roseburg High School, improve playgrounds and athletic fields and add multipurpose facilities to elementary schools. It would cost taxpayers about \$1.85 per \$1,000 for 20 years.

- Morrow County School District: \$138 million in bonds, costing about \$2.67 per \$1,000 for 20 years. It would create separate elementary, middle and high school spaces at combined schools, build a new K-12 facility at the Heppner Junior/Senior High School campus and upgrade security in every building.
- Beaverton School District: \$723 million in bonds, at a cost of \$0.25 per \$1,000 over 30 years. It would rebuild Beaverton High and Raleigh Hills Elementary, upgrade computers, replace old buses and roofs and improve security.
- Voters in Gearhart, a Clatsop County city of about 1,500 near the coast, will decide whether they should pay about \$1.21 per \$1,000 in assessed value over the next 20 years for a new fire and police station. The city’s current building, a concrete block built in 1958, lacks separate restrooms for men and women. A new \$14.5 million building would have separate restrooms, storage space and sleeping areas and be designed to survive a tsunami. It has garnered strong opposition in the city, with anti-bond signs dotting Clatsop County highways.
- Redmond is seeking about \$40 million in bonds to build a new police station in the city of about 31,000 north of Bend. Taxpayers would end up paying about \$0.73 per \$1,000 for the next 20 years.

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