

# Timber families protest climate bills at Oregon Capitol

By SIERRA DAWN McCLAIN  
Capital Press

SALEM, Ore. — A fleet of about three dozen logging trucks converged on the state fairgrounds at 8 a.m. Wednesday as part of a demonstration by dozens of loggers, millers, truckers and their families who continued to the state Capitol steps to protest two climate bills they say will devastate them and their industry.

The legislation they were protesting is aimed at slowing climate change, but industry members say they cannot afford to replace expensive diesel trucks or the skyrocketing fuel prices the two bills would cause.

In addition to the timber industry, the bills concern many of Oregon's farmers and ranchers as well.

House Bill 2007 aims to phase out older diesel engines by prohibiting the use of heavy-duty trucks with engines predating 2007. The bill has now been amended to apply only to Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas counties, but the timber industry operates in that area as well.

Supporters say HB 2007 as a critical step toward slowing climate change. The bill is a high priority for lawmakers in Portland area.

The other bill, House Bill 2020, would set a limit, or cap, on greenhouse gas emissions starting in 2021.

By 2050, the Oregon Climate Action Program estimates the annual amount of carbon emitted into the atmosphere would decrease by 43.4 million metric tons — equivalent in weight to over 9 million elephants.

Critics, however, claim that amount will make little difference, amounting to only 0.12% of global greenhouse gas emissions, which reached 36 billion metric tons, according to the 2018 Climate Conference.

The bill would require companies that emit more than 25,000 metric tons of carbon a year to buy "allowances" for every metric ton they generate. This would



Loggers and their families gather at the Oregon Capitol to protest House Bills 2007 and 2020.

Sierra Dawn McClain/Capital Press

Geisinger applauded Rep. Karin Power, D-Milwaukie, and Rep. Shelly Boshart Davis, R-Albany, for their work on amendments that have limited HB 2007 to the three-county Portland Metro area. But even with amendments, Geisinger is concerned.

"Either one of these bills passing would be very damaging," said Geisinger. "Together, they would be devastating. This protest is an expression of deep concern. It's a grassroots response."

At the Capitol, protesters took turns at the podium, voicing anger and concern.

Mike Pihl, 58, owns a private timber company just west of Portland. He has been logging since age 17.

"These are some of the toughest times I've been in," Pihl said. "It reminds me of 2008 (the start of the recession). Everything is in turmoil."

If these bills pass, Pihl said he's worried he will have to lay off more employees. In 2007, Pihl said he had 60 employees. Now, he employs 20 people. If HB 2007 and HB 2020 pass, Pihl estimates he will only be able to afford a dozen employees.

"How long am I going to put up with this kind of punishment?" said Pihl. "I'm a go-getting son-of-a-gun. I even have a tattoo that says, 'Never give up.' But how much longer can I do this? How will we survive?"



Sierra Dawn McClain / Capital Press

Mike Pihl, owner of Mike Pihl Logging Inc., prepares to address the crowd. Tony Chapman, 45, a third-generation logger from Deer Island, stands beside his 4-year-old son, Gunner, who holds the flag for the Pledge of Allegiance.



Sierra Dawn McClain/Capital Press

From left, Matt Koch, Angelia Sanchez, Cheryl Greenlee and Nick Sauer. From timber to trucking, each person represents a different industry impacted by the climate bills.

apply to about 100 companies statewide, include fuel costs and utilities. As a result, according to the Oregon Farm Bureau, fuel and energy prices would spike.

### Impact on rural industry

Jim Geisinger, executive vice president of Oregon Associated Loggers, said promoting a cleaner environment is important — but not in this way.

If HB 2020 passes, Geisinger estimated fuel costs will increase 18 to 20 cents per gallon initially and continue rising until prices reach \$6 to \$7 per gallon. Geisinger said that would drive many producers, loggers and mills out of business.

Rep. Bill Post, R-Keizer, who talked with protesters on the Capitol steps, said he believes the increase in fuel prices will dramatically

raise the cost of living for all Oregonians, not just those in rural communities.

Geisinger and those he represents are also worried about HB 2007. Because many loggers own pre-2007 vehicles, this bill would make their fleets worthless. A new logging truck, according to Geisinger, costs around \$200,000 so buying a new fleet is economically impossible for most companies.

This would impact Oregonians like Adam Lardy, 46, from Buxton, who owns pre-2007 logging trucks. Buxton is in Washington County.

"I care about a clean environment as much as the next person," Lardy said. "But I can't afford new trucks now, especially not all at once. I'm afraid for my neighbors and friends and the people I work with, too. We're afraid of losing everything."

### Rural-Urban Divide

Legislators have a big task in front of them — finding a way to slow environmental degradation without hurting rural areas.

"I can't overemphasize how divided people are in rural and urban areas," Geisinger said. "Rural people are not significantly contributing to greenhouse gases. Urban people are producing most of the greenhouse gases and causing most of the climate change, so if they want to penalize themselves, have at it. Leave rural Oregon alone."

## Oregon House approves \$1.43 million for FFA funding

SALEM, Oregon — The House of Representatives today passed an appropriations bill that will provide \$1.43 million for the Oregon Future Farmers of America. Rep. Greg Barreto (R-Cove) is the chief sponsor of HB 2444 that funds FFA activities throughout the year.

The bill provides funding for enrollment, leadership development and training, coordinating two dozen state-level competitive events, and other general FFA programs. Another \$600,000 will be appropriated for grants to school districts for extended duty contracts for program teachers during the summer.

The bill passed unanimously, 60-0.

### LETTERS to the EDITOR

#### Road improvement waste of tax money

I am against the improvements to Wallowa Mt. Road that started this week. The speed limit is 35mph. Most vehicles are going around 55. The deer are getting killed and

there is no law enforcement working the problem. I can imagine how much worse it will be after the road is smoothed out. A lot of the violators are tourists from out of state. I filled out my response last year to the survey but doubt anyone read it. Talk about a waste of tax payers money.

Gary Parraga Joseph

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ENTRY INFORMATION

1ST INSPECTION June 14th, 4pm - 6pm	2ND INSPECTION June 15th, 4pm - 6pm
3RD INSPECTION June 16th, 1pm - 3pm	WALK-IN INSPECTION June 22th, 10am - Noon

JUNE 22ND • 1:00PM

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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