

## VOICE of the CHIEFTAIN

## 2020 Vision

There is probably not a single sentient being in all of Oregon who has not followed the drama of HB2020's demise. Some bemoan its loss. Others celebrate its doom. It was a cumbersome chunk of legislation. Lengthy and obsessively detailed in some portions, excessively vague in others, its 100 page carcass—bloomed to about 160 pages if you add the amendments,

budget analyses, and other addenda — was weighty and complex. It neglected—in fact, protected—two significant sources of greenhouse gasses and pollution: Aviation fuel (read: airlines) and diesel locomotives. It added layers of bureaucracy as though it was building a hero-sandwich of regulations. Its pages detail how to distribute the largess from purchased carbon credits—mostly

to committees who will then figure out what to do with the funds, and who might benefit most from the rewards.

But now that we have wept or celebrated our goodbyes and thrown roses or bull-thistles on the freshly mounded grave, it's time to move forward on action to curb greenhouse emissions and move toward a cleaner, greener economy. We need to view the future with 2020 vision. For, despite its fatal flaws, this now-de-

funct legislation had many good ideas. They included cleaning up our single coal-fired power plant located in Boardman, as well as ensuring that natural gas-powered plants are also clean. The bill offered the following priorities for the “investment of monies from the Climate Investments Fund”—the monies collected by the Trade part of Cap and trade: protect sources of domestic drinking water; reduce greenhouse gas emissions related to

agriculture with a priority given to replacement, repowering, or retrofitting non-road equipment to reduce emissions. Invest in natural and working lands that provide carbon sequestration services, that serve to reduce or sequester greenhouse gas emissions, wildfire prevention, efficiency projects, and soil health, to name a few.

If anyone should be leading the way and benefitting from carbon sequestration and clean

energy it should be agricultural producers and rural communities. Managed well, our soils, forests, wetlands and deeply rooted bunchgrasses are exemplary carbon sinks. If we have 2020 vision, the next go-round of carbon legislation should reward those stewards of the land and agro-entrepreneurs who are sequestering carbon and lowering atmospheric carbon through careful management of working lands. That should be us.

## Cap and trade battle highlights rural-urban divide issues

By Aubrey Wieber, Claire Withycombe and Mark Miller  
Oregon Capital Bureau



Oregon Capital Bureau  
**Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athena, speaks on the Senate floor Saturday, June 29.**

The debate on climate change appears to have deepened the gap between the liberal politics of Portland and Eugene and the conservative politics of rural areas with natural resource and agricultural economies.

The impacts of the fight over doomed House Bill 2020 aren't fully clear yet. Legislators finished their work Sunday and head home to constituents with deeply divergent views of whether Oregon ought to limit carbon emissions.

Cap-and-trade advocates said lawmakers and industry skillfully exploited the rural-urban divide, whipping up resentment in traditionally conservative parts of the state and turning the climate issue into a lightning rod.

One of HB 2020's chief architects, Sen. Michael Dembrow, D-Portland, said he tried to mitigate rural concerns.

“Great care has been put into shielding rural Oregonians from negative impacts from the bill, while creating investments that will breathe new life into their local economies,” Dembrow said. “The opposition knows this but has chosen to sow fear in the hearts and minds of rural Oregonians through a campaign of distortion and misinformation.”

Opponents, including the 11 Republican senators who fled the state last week to prevent a vote on HB 2020, say the cap-and-trade plan's urban supporters simply don't understand their rural counterparts.

“Part of governing is including all of Oregon, not just Multnomah County, in what is going to be included in legislation,” said Sen. Tim Knopp, R-Bend.

Andrew Miller, a major Republican donor and chief executive officer of Portland-based Stimson Lumber Co., framed HB 2020 in more colorful terms.

“It's a ‘screw-you’ to rural Oregon so that people in urban Oregon can feel good about saving the planet,” Miller said.

Oregon is often described as a “blue state,” one that favors Democrats. But that belies the reality that Oregon, like many Western states, contains sharp political contrasts.

Oregon's few major cities and their suburbs hold the bulk of the population and, therefore, its voter base and political power. They are overwhelmingly “blue” in contrast to the largely “red” counties of Eastern Oregon and the Oregon coast.

As of January, Oregon had

969,106 registered Democrats, 701,392 registered Republicans and 911,387 voters who were not affiliated with a party.

And some of the state's rapidly growing regions such as Bend and Hood River are becoming more liberal.

But one statewide survey suggested views on climate change were driven more by politics than geography.

The Portland firm DHM surveyed Oregonians in March about whether Oregon “should do more to address climate change.”

Eighty-five percent of Democrats said yes, compared to 25 percent of Republicans and 53 percent of nonaffiliated voters and those registered with other parties.

By area, 64 percent of respondents in the Portland area agreed, compared with 58 percent in the Willamette Valley and 44 percent in the rest of the state.

Backers of cap-and-trade said rural Oregon would have benefited in a way that opponents downplayed, obfuscated or ignored.

Sen. Arnie Roblan, a Coos Bay Democrat, said such views don't account for the challenges of life in rural Oregon.

“They have to drive farther and farther because the mills are farther and farther away,” said Roblan, who opposed the cap-and-trade plan. “All of these things conspire to make people who don't see a lot of hope out there, and that is very frustrating to them, and when other people don't acknowledge that, it makes it even harder.”

Even supporters of HB 2020 like Sen. Jeff Golden, D-Ashland, acknowledge it's a tough sell.

Golden is one of three Democratic senators who live outside the Willamette Valley and represent largely rural constituencies. He said he understands the concerns he hears in his sprawling southern Oregon district.

The timber industry there was decimated by the spotted owl decision and other shifts, both political and economic, in the late 20th century.

Some timber companies supported HB 2020, which exempted the industry from regulations.

Others did not, including Miller's Stimson Lumber. Miller believes that while some businesses and groups would prosper under cap-and-trade, others would suffer.

“It's all about picking political winners and losers,” Miller said.

Similarly, while cap-and-trade had the support of some farmers, the Oregon Farm Bureau was opposed.

Jenny Dresler, lobbyist for the Oregon Farm Bureau, said cap-and trade didn't address businesses' concerns that cost increases would drive them under.

“I don't know that it's urban versus rural as much as it's understanding some of the pressures in different sectors in Oregon's economy,” she said.

Oregon's farmers compete with growers in other states, and even in other countries. Neighboring Idaho doesn't have anything like the regulations and fees included in HB 2020, Dresler pointed out.

Analysts said the bill would have immediately resulted in higher fuel costs, something opponents zeroed in on.

Rep. Lynn Findley, R-Vale, worried that the increased cost of fuel, for example, could make Oregon farmers less competitive.

“In my district, you take a farmer in Ontario that grows onions,” Findley said. “When he sells his onions, he sells them on an open market with growers from Idaho, and if the farmer from Oregon has to pay 22 cents a gallon more for fuel, his operating costs are up. . . . The guy from Idaho whose fuel is 22 cents a gallon cheaper, his cost of production is less, but they're selling the same product to the same people.”

It's not just farmers and loggers, either. Higher fuel prices affect urban and rural Oregon differently.

While Portlanders might complain about sitting in traffic not experienced in places like Coos Bay and Ontario, most of the distances they travel are short, and to get to some appointments, they can walk, bike, or take the bus or light rail.

In places where the population density is low, like Findley's district — which is roughly the size of South Carolina — it's a different story.

“The people that don't have those expenses say, ‘Well, you have to reduce your car driving.’” Findley said. “(But) you have to be able to live and eat. You go to a doctor, you drive 150 miles. . . . It's a different set of rules.”

## Congress should keep after robocallers

Bend Bulletin

### OTHER VOICES

We've likely all had them, maybe at least once a day — those annoying robocalls that interrupt dinner or whatever else you happen to be doing at the time. Stopping them permanently may be difficult, even impossible. But Congress continues to try, and that's good.

Rep. Greg Walden, R-Hood River, the top Republican on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, and Rep. Frank Pallone, D-N.J., committee chairman, are co-sponsors of the Stopping Bad Robocalls Act, which this week was sent to the full committee for a vote.

The measure tells the Federal Communications Commission to require telephone carriers, both of landline and cellular services, to use technology that prevents spoofing, which involves providing misleading caller identi-

fication. In addition, the bill would extend the statute of limitations for some robocall violations and pressure the FCC to enforce current robocall laws more strictly.

Robocalls are more than an occasional annoyance. The FCC says more than 5 billion of the calls, many of them fraudulent, were made in May alone. In 2018, for example, robocalls pitched phony health insurance policies to unsuspecting victims. So far this year, more than 25 billion robocalls have been made in the U.S. Moreover, they cost Americans billions of dollars per year, according to Truecaller, the Swedish company that makes a robocall blocker by the same name for cellphones. Even important phone lines at hospitals get besieged by them.

It's no wonder the FCC

has begun beefing up efforts against robocallers with its Operation Call It Quits campaign. And, it offers consumers suggestions for how to deal with the calls. Chief among them? Don't answer the phone if you don't recognize a telephone number, and if a robocall is answered, simply hang up without saying or doing anything.

As for the Stopping Bad Robocalls Act, if it's greeted with the same bipartisan enthusiasm a similar measure received in the Senate, it will be approved with little difficulty. Then, the two measures face the tricky business of reconciling differences between them.

Even all this effort is unlikely to eliminate robocalls permanently, unfortunately. There's big money to be made in suckering people, and robocallers will no doubt find new ways to reach victims. That said, both Congress and the FCC must keep trying.

## Oregon Legislative session concludes for the year with a tense final day

By Dirk VanderHart  
Oregon Public Broadcasting

SALEM — Oregon lawmakers concluded their work for the year Sunday, marking the close of the most remarkable and contentious legislative sessions in modern memory.

In a day filled with flaring tempers and frequent confusion, lawmakers in the House and Senate passed a completed state budget and a raft of policy bills just after 5:20 p.m., well before the midnight deadline set forth in the constitution.

Among the bills headed to Gov. Kate Brown are a proposal to create a paid family medical leave insurance program in Oregon, a law allowing duplexes in lots zoned for single-family homes, and ballot referrals that will ask voters to place a cap on campaign contributions and hike tobacco taxes.

Those were just a few of well over 100 bills — many of them high-profile goals for Democrats — lawmakers rushed through in the final two days.

As the Senate president and House speaker gavelled out the session nearly in unison, lawmakers erupted in cheers. The doors were thrown open in both chambers, and lawmakers waved



OPB Photo

**Sen. Brian Boquist, R-Dallas, waits to enter the floor of the Senate on the last day of the legislative session. Sen. Boquist said Sunday morning that no one should have cause to worry about their safety, after his remarks that state police should “send bachelors and come heavily armed” if they tried to apprehend him.**

at each other from across the expanse of the rotunda. In the Senate, staffers tossed stacks of paper in the air in celebration.

But before that revelry, tensions dominated much of Sunday — particularly in the Senate, where lawmakers are still harboring resentment over a nine-day boycott by Republicans.

Controversy over comments Sen. Brian Boquist, R-Dallas, made about state police ahead of that walk-out continued to roil the chamber Sunday, with several Democrats requesting

that he stay off the Senate floor.

Boquist, who'd complied with a similar request on Saturday, insisted on attending. He said his remarks just before the Republican walkout — that police should “send bachelors and come heavily armed” if they tried to arrest him — were not an indication he posed a threat.

“If people are worried, they shouldn't be,” he said Sunday morning. “That's why we have state police here. They do a fine job.”

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