

Gov. Kate Brown recall efforts fail to make ballot

By Claire Withycombe
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Supporters of a petition to recall Gov. Kate Brown came up short of the signatures needed for a ballot challenge, Oregon Republican Party Chair Bill Currier said Monday.

Currier made the announcement midday on the Lars Larson Show, the conservative talk show. Supporters needed at least 280,050 valid signatures by 5 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 14 to put a recall on the ballot.

One effort, filed by Currier, fell short by about 8 percent, or about 22,400 signatures.

A separate effort, known as “Flush Down Kate Brown,” received 100,000 signatures by people who were not on the GOP’s signature list, Larson said on the show. Larson said that effort also was not as successful as the party’s.

Michael Cross, the lead

sponsor of the “Flush Down Kate Brown” petition, delivered nine boxes of petitions to the Secretary of State’s office around 2 p.m. on Monday, according to the Secretary of State’s office.

Workers counted all 23,926 signature sheets. But since each sheet can only have, at most, ten signatures each, after counting the sheets it was clear there weren’t enough signatures for that effort to qualify for the ballot.

Currier told Larson that there was “absolutely” support for another recall effort.

“This fight is not over,” Currier said.

Currier said that between the two efforts, enough valid signatures were collected.

“Another way to put this, is, there were enough signatures collected...they just can’t be combined,” he said.

Currier also said that the petition received quite a few invalid signatures that he said could be easily cor-

rected if petitioners file again. Many invalid signatures were “simply illegible,” Currier said.

He said over the weekend, they had been able to identify about 100,000 invalid signatures by registered voters whose signatures could be converted into valid signatures.

“We have an address and a name, and with a little bit of research, we can tie that to a specific person and make that valid,” Currier said. “And there were other folks who didn’t put the correct information down, they put the wrong address, and so we can tie them back to a correct address.”

Currier did not return requests seeking further comment Monday.

Brown, a Democrat, was first appointed governor in 2015 after John Kitzhaber resigned after an influence-peddling scandal. She was elected to fill Kitzhaber’s unexpired term in 2016 and reelected in 2018.

In the election last year, Brown received 50.05 percent of the vote, or 934,498 votes, according to Secretary of State data. Her main opponent, Republican Knute Buehler, received 814,988 votes.

Currier said the public and the party’s volunteers were committed to the cause of removing Brown.

The GOP petition said Brown has “overturned the will of the voters” by allowing undocumented immigrants to get driver’s licenses, “failed to protect

Oregon’s foster children” and “failed to address” the state’s public pension debt, among other grievances.

“The volunteers are, for the most part, so committed to seeing Brown removed that we can carry this forward,” Currier said on the show, “But we do have to work out details like timing, when we begin round two, setting up the infrastructure for all of that to happen. So this fight is definitely not over.”

Brown’s supports say she has fulfilled her campaign promises.

“Gov. Brown ran a campaign promising to move Oregon forward by investing in our schools, creating paid family and medical leave, and protecting the environment,” said Thomas Wheatley, political adviser to Brown, in a written statement Monday. “That’s exactly what she did this year.”

Wheatley contended that “recalls should be used only

when an elected official has committed a crime, not when someone disagrees with the policies of the governor or another elected official.”

“The extremists pushing reckless recalls want to overturn the will of the voters who elected Democrats by wide margins,” Wheatley said. “In rejecting this recall, the public has sent a clear message: Oregonians don’t want to waste their tax dollars on a reckless recall against Democratic lawmakers who are moving our state forward.”

Currier said that the number of signatures they gathered in three months was “historic.” Experts had observed that getting enough signatures within 90 days with an all-volunteer campaign would be a steep climb.

“I think people need to understand that we had 90 days to collect twice as many signatures as a normal petition, which gets a whole year to do that,” Currier said. “So this is historic.”

Some Northeast Oregonians and tribal members are dreaming of a freer Snake River

GUEST COLUMN

Christina de Villier

It’s all connected: that was the takeaway theme from this year’s Nimiipuu River Rendezvous, the fifth annual paddle rally on behalf of breaching the four lower Snake River dams. “From the mountaintops to the ocean, it’s the same water,” said Nez Perce Tribal member Gary Dorr, whose lineage is Wallowa band, and who was paddle master of the event. “We want you to go home with a lot of relationship to this water,” he told gathered attendees at Hells Gate State Park on September 20th, 2019, as he and others welcomed them to the Rendezvous.

The three-day event included film screenings; dancing; two nights of shared food including elk and salmon (Alaskan salmon, ironically—this year’s Snake River Chinook returns have been very low); talks and stories by Tribal elders, economists, scientists, and fish and orca advocates remembering the river before the lower Snake dams went in and making the case for their removal; and a paddle that brought hundreds of people out onto the reservoir to show support for a free-flowing river.

A small contingent had made the trek from Union and Wallowa counties to the event at Hells Gate State Park. Why did these Oregonians come? What do they imagine will happen in their upstream homes if these four dams (Ice Harbor,



Christina deVillier

Canoes from many Pacific Northwest tribes, including the Nez Perce, Spokane, and many others participated in the rally for removal of the four lower Snake River dams.

Lower Granite, Lower Monumental and Little Goose) are breached? Each had their own reasons, but all echoed the same theme: connection.

“If we took these dams out,” said Garik Asplund of Joseph, “there’d be a stronger link between our inland mountains and the ocean. Salmon are a huge source of marine nutrients for our trees, for our rivers, for the lake, for people—why would you cut off a self-sustaining influx of nutrients when you need it?”

David Moyal of La Grande said he’d brought his ten-year-old son to the rally to help him understand the interconnectedness of all the life that depends on the Northwest’s great river systems. David was once a river guide and he remembers trips on the Snake before the dams went in: “Beaches the size of five football fields, endless beaches, and the trees and animals down by the water were just amazing. Being on the river now is great,” he said, “but it tears my heart out, too, because the riparian corridor is decimated. There’s no sed-

iment”—it gets caught behind the dams and has to be dredged every couple of years, at taxpayer expense—“so the beaches and backwaters are gone or disappearing; there are no nooks and crannies being created anymore for the bottom-of-the-food-chain critters that sustain abundance. Fish decline is just the most obvious decline. It’s all connected.”

Gary Dorr, the Wallowa Band Tribal member, is also a former Chairman of the Nez Perce Tribe and a member of the recently convened Idaho Governor’s Salmon Workgroup. Over the course of the rally, Gary spoke about salmon and the struggling Puget Sound orcas, which depend on abundant Chinook runs. But he too emphasized the less charismatic animals. “This year 21 lamprey make it through the dams,” he said, for example. “There used to be millions. Lamprey swim awkwardly. They latch onto salmon to get around more easily.

People think that’s a bad thing, an ugly thing. But lamprey are buffer prey. The predator birds and fish feed on lamprey and so the juvenile salmon make it through. It’s a trade-off. This year, 21 of these fish made it up here to our waters. In our lifetimes, something could go extinct. This year, for all we know. Our food supply is upside down.”

Pip Redding of Enterprise agreed. Breaching the dams “could strengthen local food systems,” he said. “There’s inherent value to being able to get your food from the place where you are.”

Throughout the rendezvous, as they watched films and discussed economic transformations, attendees at the rally worked to keep in mind the connections between small abundant species and large endangered ones, between mountains and oceans, snowpack and late-season water, water temperatures and fish survival, irrigators and predators, economics and natural systems. While these relationships are complex, one connection is very straightforward, and it infused the whole gathering: what happens on the lower Snake River matters to everyone upstream and down. As Nez Perce elder Allen Pinkham Senior put it, whether you’re Tribal or non-tribal, a top-of-the-foodchain human being or a lamprey, a headwaters hiker or an ocean fisherman, “what we all have in common is water.”



Ellen Morris Bishop

First graders in Mrs. Hook’s Enterprise Elementary School class examine a real bear claw necklace and beaded moccasins as part of understanding the close relationship between the Nez Perce and the natural world. The event was part of the school’s celebration of Indigenous Peoples Day.

Enterprise Elementary School celebrates Indigenous People’s Day

By Ellen Morris Bishop
Wallowa County Chieftain

Enterprise Elementary School and the Wallowa Band Nez Perce Homeland Project collaborated to celebrate Oregon’s official holiday of Indigenous Peoples Day with discussions and hands-on displays about the lives and culture of the Nez Perce. About 100 children in grades K-3 participated. They examined teepees, necklaces, and the seasonal round calendar to learn about the Nez Perce’s relationship with the natural world. They thought about how a culture could use oral storytelling rather than writing to pass on its history. And they learned that people had lived here for more than 16,000 years.

“It’s important for children to understand both perspectives, and be aware of the bigger picture of what truly happened during the settlement of our land,” said Superintendent Erika Pinkerton.

“This is an opportunity to explore the deep history of this region,” said Angela Bombaci, of the Wallowa Band Nez Perce Homeland Project who developed and coordinated the event. “We wanted the kids to know 1) Whose homeland they live in 2) That they were here long before any Europeans traveled here 3) That their respect and knowledge of the land allowed them to live well for thousands of years here 4) That Indigenous peoples know many things to be true about the ancient past even if not written in books, thanks to oral tradition and archaeological evidence. We were excited to receive the invitation from Enterprise Primary School. Indigenous People’s Day is a great opportunity to start a conversation with these young kids that we can build on as they grow up in this community. We hope to celebrate this holiday with even more students next year.”

Barbara Kingsolver
Now in Paperback
Unsheltered
by Barbara Kingsolver
The Bookloft
107 E. Main St. 541.426.3351
Always open at www.bookloftoregon.com • bookloft@eoni.com

JB BANE ELECTRICAL & PLUMBING SUPPLIES
& COMPANY
ELECTRICAL & WATER SYSTEM CONTRACTOR
PUMPS • IRRIGATION HARDWARE • APPLIANCE PARTS
208 S. RIVER ST. • ENTERPRISE, OR
www.jbbane.com • 541-426-3344

SPACE RESERVATION DEADLINES
for weekly advertising is **5pm Friday** for the following week. Ad copy is **DUE on Monday at 10am**. Ads **MUST** be approved by **Tuesday at NOON**.
Contact Jennifer Cooney at jcooney@wallowa.com • 541-805-9630
Wallowa County **CHIEFTAIN**
209 NW First St., Enterprise • 541-426-4567

Wallowa BUSINESS
Supports Free and Confidential Business Counseling and Services through Blue Mountain Community College
Wallowa County Small Business Development Center
Small Business Advisors
Kristy Athens **Lori Schaafsma**
To begin your free and confidential business consultation call
541-278-5864
Wallowa Business is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit public benefit corp.