

# Oregon News

## Bentz seeks to exempt Malheur Co., part of Baker from carbon cap bill

■ Republican State Senator says bill would be ‘a disaster for this part of the state’

By Pat Caldwell  
The Malheur Enterprise

SALEM — Sen. Cliff Bentz played another card from a rapidly dwindling political deck recently in an effort to ease Malheur County impacts from a proposal to slash carbon emissions.

Bentz earlier this month proposed an amendment to the cap-and-trade legislation that would exclude — or “carve out” — portions of Eastern Oregon for five years if the carbon plan is approved.

Whether Bentz, whose district includes Baker County, succeeds is uncertain given the tumultuous politics recently at the Capitol.

Even after HB 2020 moved out of the Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction without Bentz’s amendment, he said it would be “still alive and kicking” as another legislative committee considers the proposal.

The legislation would cap Oregon’s greenhouse gas emissions. Critics of the proposal charge it would damage the state’s economy while supporters assert the plan would help the environment and curb climate change.

Bentz’s amendment covered the “eastern edge economic zone” that includes Malheur County and the Huntington area in Baker County.

The amendment called for the state to review and possibly lift the exclusion after five years, but only if Idaho creates a carbon restriction.

Bentz said he thought his amendment was necessary to “maintain parity between the costs to consumers in Idaho and to consumers in Oregon of placing a price on greenhouse gas emissions.”

For months Bentz has demanded the carbon restriction plan process slow down as he worked to find alternatives.

Last week the Ontario lawmaker said he isn’t sure his proposal to exclude Malheur County from the carbon bill

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— State Sen. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario



would find traction. He said he talked over the exclusion plan with the committee co-chairs, Sen. Michael Dembrow, D-Portland, and Rep. Karin Power, D-Milwaukie.

“They didn’t seem enthusiastic,” said Bentz.

He said that proponents of the bill have an “inability to understand that there are consequence to their actions.”

“Their willingness to sacrifice parts of Oregon sends a message they care more about the environment than people. They are basically saying it is too bad these smaller communities get hurt but we have to save the world,” said Bentz.

The amendment would make a difference for local fuel shippers and area residents, said Brad Holland of Campo & Poole Distributing in Ontario. The company is a major regional fuel supplier.

“What it would do for us is give us at least a few years relief from the carbon burden tax. It would keep us competitive while the rest of the state works through the program and sees if it actually gives them the benefits they think it will,” said Holland.

As with a major oil company, a small operation like Campo & Poole Distributing would be forced to buy allowances on the state auction market. That extra cost to Campo & Poole Distributing would be passed on to consumers.

Holland said by some estimates the price of a gallon of gas would jump by 15 or 16 cents if the Legislature approves the carbon emission mandate.

Bentz told his committee

colleagues that gas prices would hammer businesses on the Oregon side of the Snake River.

“Soon there will be no one buying fuel on this (Oregon) side of the river. Why would they?” said Bentz.

Lawmakers have proposed designating up to \$100 million a year to be refunded to low-income households in Eastern Oregon to offset hikes in fuel prices.

Holland agreed that Ontario’s location next to Idaho is significant.

“The challenge with a border town is that Idaho doesn’t have the same regulation appetite. So, we compete with Idaho. We in Ontario, Vale, Nyssa, even up into Baker, it is going to be a challenge on the fuel side of things,” said Holland. Campo & Poole may not be the only local firms to feel the impact of House Bill 2020. EP Minerals, west of Vale, and Kraft Heinz Company in Ontario could also be hit by the emission legislation.

Rep. Lynn Findley, R-Vale, warned lawmakers in March that EP Minerals could depart — taking with it 115 jobs — Oregon if the emissions legislation goes through.

Kraft Heinz Company has not commented on the impact of the legislation. The firm employs about 500 people in Ontario.

Another area employer, Ash Grove Cement near Durkee, might also be hit hard by a carbon emission law. Ash Grove employees 115 people with an annual payroll of \$13 million. One version of the carbon bill — released in

March — contains provisions to offset a rise in gas prices for rural Oregon.

Bentz said the committee also made other adjustments to the proposed legislation that touch businesses such as Ash Grove, EP Minerals and Kraft Heinz.

“We will just have to wait and see what those businesses think,” said Bentz.

Bentz said he agrees that some kind of effort to curb climate change is necessary. He just doesn’t think the House Bill 2020 is crafted to save jobs in places like Eastern Oregon.

“Sadly, the folks that are busy drafting the bill believe there are things far more important than jobs and businesses,” said Bentz.

Bentz said he believes the passage of House Bill 2020, without the exclusion for Malheur County and Huntington, will make a severe impact locally.

“It will be a disaster for this part of the state,” said Bentz.

Two local business leaders opposed the legislation in written testimony submitted to the joint committee.

“The current HB 2020 would tip the scales so disproportionately that any other attempt to balance or gain economic advantage over neighboring Idaho would be fruitless, including the work of the border board,” wrote Shawna Peterson, an Ontario attorney.

Tiffany Cruickshank, writing on behalf of Snake River Produce, an onion packing and shipping firm in Nyssa, also raised concerns about competition from Idaho.

“Furthermore, HB 2020 will have a detrimental impact on Oregon businesses’ ability to compete — and especially where Snake River Produce is located is only a mere 1.2 miles from the state of Idaho, the effects will be compounded where competition is concerned,” Cruickshank wrote.

### STATE BRIEFING

#### Governor signs bill requiring annual report on wildfire protection efforts

SALEM — Gov. Kate Brown on Wednesday signed a bill to require an annual report to the Legislature on efforts to protect communities near forest lands from wildfires.

House Bill 2222 orders the Oregon Department of Forestry to tell lawmakers about implementation and enforcement of property notifications and certifications required under the Oregon Forestland-Urban Interface Fire Protection Act.

The bill was inspired, in part, by the wildfire last year in Paradise, Calif that killed 85 people and destroyed thousands of buildings. Bend was one of the communities mentioned in testimony on HB 2222 that could be susceptible to similar fires.

The bill’s co-sponsors included Rep. Jack Zika, R-Redmond, Rep. Cheri Helt, R-Bend, and Rep. Daniel Bonham, R-The Dalles.

— WesCom News Service

#### Bill would allow cities to lower speed limits on some sections of street

SALEM (AP) — The city of Bend is backing legislation that would allow it to lower speed limits in some residential areas below what is currently allowed by state law.

Senate Bill 558 is before the Senate for approval. It advanced Monday from the Joint Committee on Transportation on an 11-1 vote.

The Bulletin reports the legislation would allow a city to reduce speed on some highways by 5 miles per hour lower than the state-mandated speed.

The reduction is limited to streets that are located in residential districts and that are not an arterial highway.

#### Report predicts most future population growth from people moving into state

PORTLAND (AP) — A new report from the state says that in future years, Oregon’s population will mostly grow through people moving into the state rather than from new births.

Oregon Public Broadcasting reports Wednesday that the Oregon Office of Economic Analysis predicts the state will see deaths outnumber births sometime in the next decade.

Josh Lehner, a state economist, predicts the flip will happen around 2026 or 2027.

It would be the first time in Oregon’s history that deaths outnumber births.

The trend is already affecting the state’s more rural counties, but now is spreading statewide.

As the trend continues, analysts say factors that negatively affect migration to Oregon from other states — such as housing affordability — will have a bigger impact on the economy and the size of public budgets.

#### Former director of Burns Airport gets probation for stealing federal property

EUGENE (AP) — The former manager of an Oregon airport has been sentenced to four years of probation for stealing surplus federal property.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reported Wednesday that 45-year-old Jeffery Robert Cotton was sentenced Wednesday in U.S. District Court in Eugene.

Officials say that while managing the Burns Municipal Airport between 2014 and 2016, Cotton obtained heavy equipment belonging to the city 258 miles east of Eugene.

Cotton pleaded guilty in April to two counts of theft from programs receiving federal funds.

Authorities say Cotton signed fake bills of sale suggesting his nonprofit corporation, Emergency Equipment Solutions Inc., purchased titles to \$1.3 million worth of property. Officials say Cotton acquired a heater/air conditioner, lighting, tractors, a firetruck and other trucks.

## Legislature will start Saturday floor sessions

SALEM (AP) — The Oregon House of Representatives will begin holding Saturday floor sessions next week.

Speaker Tina Kotek made that announcement Wednesday in the latest sign lawmakers are ramping up with an eye toward the Constitutional session deadline five weeks away.

“Because of the need to continue to move bills on the floor, I ask you to hold your Saturdays through the month of June, starting June 1. We will do 10 a.m. floors on Saturdays,” Kotek, D-Portland, announced on the House floor.

“I don’t know how long they will last; it will be dependent on where the calendar is,” she

said. “But we are getting close to the end of session and sine die is imminent.”

The Statesman Journal reports that while legislative leadership hopes to end session by June 21, nine days ahead of their Constitutional deadline, the House is grappling with a massive backlog of bills ready to receive a vote.

It’s the byproduct of a slowdown tactic deployed by House Republicans for more than three weeks. Democrats control both the House and Senate.

House Republican Leader Carl Wilson said Wednesday that Republicans will continue their tactic of requiring bills to be read in full. This

was popularized during the 2016 session and slows down the legislative process considerable, particularly when lengthy bills come to the floor.

The bill that sparked Republican protest was the \$2 billion education funding bill, which was engrossed at 40 pages. It took the clerk more than 2 hours to read it.

Wilson said Republican and Democratic leadership have been in negotiations about the future of a number of bills that Republicans want to influence. At the top of their list are HB 2020 — the major greenhouse gas emissions cap-and-trade bill — and HB 2007 — which deals with reducing diesel emissions.

## Union Pacific Railroad announces it will lay off up to 195 at yard near Hermiston

HERMISTON (AP) — Union Pacific Railroad filed notice this week with Oregon that it will lay off up to 195 employees at the Hinkle Rail Yard in Hermiston and close the yard’s supply warehouse and mechanical shop.

The East Oregonian reports the railroad said the layoffs would be completed by July 19 and are expected to be permanent. The cuts are an escalation of layoffs that have happened at the rail yard since October 2018.

Mayor David Drotzmann says it’s his understanding the latest layoffs will leave between 40 and 45 employees. The city of Hermiston’s June 2018 financial report listed Union Pacific as one of the city’s largest employers.

Railroad spokesman Tim McMahan told the newspaper the company would move some of Hinkle’s operations to yards in Portland; Spokane, Washington; Ogden, Utah; as well as Pocatello and Nampa, Idaho.

## OSP officer honored for valor

By Deb Riechmann  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Fourteen public safety officers were awarded the Medal of Valor by President Donald Trump on Wednesday, including eight who responded to a shooting at a southern California polling place.

“Every officer, firefighter and first responder who receives this award embodies the highest ideals of service and sacrifice, character and courage,” Trump said during a White House ceremony.

The medal is the nation’s highest honor for bravery by a public safety officer.

Eight men from the Azusa, California, police department were honored for placing themselves in danger and saving the lives of civilians and fellow officers during the shooting on Election Day 2016. The recipients were: Retired Lt. Xavier Torres; Sgt. Seth Chapman; retired Sgt. Terry Smith Jr.; Sgt. Thomas Avila III; Sgt. Rocky Wenrick; Cpl. Andrew Rodriguez Sr.; senior officer Carlos Plascencia; and detective Manuel Campos.

When they arrived at the polling place, a person was shooting from a house across the street from a park. An elderly woman had been killed and a man lay wounded on a sidewalk. Two vehicles had collided and a woman in one of the cars was critically injured. The shooter was eventually killed and the officers were credited for preventing other deaths and injuries.

The other recipients were:

- Nicholas Cederberg, senior trooper with the Oregon State Police, who suffered life-threatening injuries while helping apprehend a man wanted for shooting his estranged wife eight times. The attacker rammed the patrol car and shot Cederberg in the right hip. As he lay on the ground,

Cederberg was shot 12 more times. Five bullets were stopped by his armored vest, but seven penetrated his body. Cederberg underwent surgeries to repair a collapsed lung and two broken arms.

- Ohio State University police officer Alan Horujko, who risked his life on Nov. 28, 2016, to save the lives of civilians. A driver had driven down a sidewalk and struck several pedestrians, and then got out of his car and began attacking people with a knife. Horujko killed the attacker after trying unsuccessfully to get him to disarm. Thirteen people were attacked and 11 were hospitalized, one in critical condition.

- Fire Capt. Dustin Moore and firefighter and paramedic Andrew Freisner of the fire department in Lenexa, Kansas, risked their lives to rescue a family from inside a burning apartment building on April 24, 2017. They climbed a ladder to the second floor, went inside and rescued an unconscious adult, two young children and the family dog.

Two awards also were given to the families of fallen officers:

- Sgt. Verdell Smith Sr. of the Memphis, Tennessee, police department was clearing an intersection of pedestrians on June 4, 2016, when he was struck by a vehicle driven by a suspect in a triple shooting.

- Officer Brent Thompson of the Dallas, Texas, Area Rapid Transit Police Department was killed on July 7, 2016, during a shootout with a man who had just killed three Dallas police officers and wounded three others with an assault rifle. Thompson’s actions created a distraction that allowed others to aid the wounded and gave cover to officers so they could force the attacker inside a building where he was killed by the Dallas Police SWAT team.