

Oregon News

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- 6:54 a.m. The convoy unexpectedly pulls into a rest stop south of Wilsonville creating quite a traffic jam. The driver in a lead car needed a restroom break. After leaving the rest stop, the convoy was joined by truckers from east Oregon.
- 7:41 a.m. "Alright, we're No. 1, according to that Prius driver," a trucker says with gleeful sarcasm over the radio.
- 7:53 a.m. The convoy reaches Salem and is joined by another group of trucks from southern Oregon. There's talk on the radio that a car is trying to disrupt the convoy and a reminder to be on their best behavior so they don't get lumped in with "militia types." A passenger in a dump truck unfurls a Gadsden flag and attaches it to the roof.
- 8:23 a.m. The convoy turns on to Salem Parkway and splits up. Some head to the state fairgrounds in northeast Salem while others go west out of Salem to the Polk County Fairgrounds in Rickreall.

As trucks from across the state merged into a miles-long convoy and snaked its way to the state Capitol, hundreds of people arrived early to cheer the arrival of the trucks.

Among them was Ron and Beth Simon, wearing matching jackets emblazoned with “#TimberUnity farmers” across the back and a similar patch over their hearts.

The couple from Malin, Oregon, drove five hours to arrive Thursday morning to be part of the rally, represent-



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ing Simon Brothers Trucking and the family farm that produces hay and grain. Simon and his brothers Ed and Fred parked trucks out in front of the Capitol, one with a with a message for Gov. Kate Brown: "Can you hear us now, Kate?"

Approximately 1,500 truckers, farmers, loggers, diesel machinists, veterans and others showed up Thursday to express their displeasure with the revised plan by lawmakers to cut the state's greenhouse gas emissions.

"This bill is going to put

small businesses like us out of business," said Ron Simon, 57. "We were hoping to work for another 10 years before retiring. If this passes, we'll probably have to retire early."

Simon said he hasn't seen recent amendments to the legislation that would phase in regulations geographically in regulations with the Portland metro area and exempt areas east of the Cascade Range. He still believes the plan would eventually encompass all of Oregon.

By 9 a.m., Court Street in

front of the Capitol was lined with people holding brightly colored signs, American flags, Gadsden flags and other insignia.

They came from Coos Bay and Wheeler, Alsea and Albany, Ontario and Port Orford. They included men, women and children — singular demonstrators and families united around a common goal of making themselves and their plight as rural Oregonians heard.

They sported shirts bearing the names of their companies and political messages. “Make America Great Again” hats were in full display, along with trucker hats, cowboy hats and hard hats.

A group of men in III% gear milled about.

As more trucks arrived, the brightly colored sea of denim, flannel, camouflage and reflective safety vests swelled around the Capitol steps. The crowd anxiously awaited speakers to take the microphone, and Cries of “God bless America” and “God bless Donald Trump” cut through the din and prompted echoing cheers from nearby demonstrators.

Children shuffled through the crowd around their parents, many carrying Douglas Fir saplings handed out by Timber Unity. They stood along the side of the street, excitedly signaling for truck

drivers to blast their horns. Dozens of organizations took the opportunity to set up booths on the Capitol mall to pitch their causes, asking participants to sign petitions, register to vote or learn about emerging political candidates. Joey Nations, a Republican running again for Congress in Oregon's Fifth Congressional District, was among them. As speakers took to the podium, the crowd fell silent except for the blaring horns of trucks that continued to circle the Capitol. The audience listened intently and participated eagerly when prompted.

“They want you to shut up and comply! Are you going to?” asked Shannon Poe, president of the American Mining Rights Association.

Timber Unity leaders, lawmakers, candidates for office and industrial leaders all took to the microphone and commended the crowd for their participation and making their voices heard in front of Oregon’s elected officials. By around 2 p.m., much of the crowd had dispersed or gone inside the Capitol to speak with their legislators.

But not everyone was happy with the rally.

A graduate student from Portland State University, Kirsten Sarle, had set up an air quality monitor. The data Sarle collected revealed massive spikes in black carbon, or soot, pollution Thursday morning.

It was so bad that the Little Friends Montessori school — across the street from the Capitol — wouldn’t let their young charges go outside.

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