



Democrats prep Biden's virus aid package with or without the GOP

BY LISA MASCARO AND JOSH BOAK The Associated Press WASHINGTON Democrats are preparing to push ahead quickly on President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief package even if it means using procedural tools to pass the legislation on their own, leaving Republicans behind. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer told senators to be ready to vote as soon as next week on a budget reconciliation package that would lay the groundwork for swift passage. Coming so soon in Biden's administration, the action provides a first test of Republican opposition to the White House priorities as well as to the new president's prom-ise of a "unity" agenda. "The work must move forward, preferably with our Republican colleagues, but without them if we must," Schumer said after a private meeting of Democratic senators. Time is of the essence to address this crisis. We're keeping all options open on the table."



boosts the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour over five vears.

The next steps remain highly fluid. The bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus of more than 50 House lawmakers met virtually Tuesday with top administration officials on the virus aid and economic recovery package. And the dozen senators emerging from a lengthy private meeting with the White House on Sunday evening are talking on their own to try to craft a more targeted bill. The bipartisan senators assembled privately again Monday evening. White House press secretary Jen Psaki told reporters earlier Tuesday that Biden is still looking to negotiate on an aid package, while putting a priority on acting swiftly before aid lapses in March. "He laid out his big package, his big vision of what it should look like, and people are giv-ing their feedback," Psaki said. "He's happy to have those discussions and fully expects it's not going to look exactly the same on the other end."

Officials at the Port of Coos Bay say they plan to move forward and seek alternatives for their channel modification project despite the recent disruption of the Jordan Cove pipeline project, which the channel modification has been partly dependent on.

Coos Bay

Continued from A11

The Port of Coos Bay currently has Roseburg Forest Products and Jordan Cove listed.

"I think the biggest thing folks need to understand is the channel modification as it is today needs to have Jordan Cove go through," Laura Hicks, the channel modification's project manager at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, told the Capital Press in the fall.

Port officials agreed that if Jordan Cove fell through, they would need to search for an alternative beneficiary. And that's exactly what they're doing.

Barber of the port told the Capital Press Monday that port officials have recently seen "a marked uptick in entities reaching out to us due to the significant congestion

currently plaguing West Coast ports."

Barber said the port is in conversations with potential investors and beneficiaries that would allow the channel modification to move forward even without Jordan Cove.

Barber declined to name any potential beneficiaries, saying that "with all of our projects, we are bound by non-disclosure agreements."

Even if the port finds an alternative beneficiary, officials have other challenges to contend with.

Last month, the governor slashed \$15 million in funding for the port's channel modification from her proposed state budget. Legislators, including Sen. Arnie Roblan, D-Coos Bay, are pushing back.

"I'm confident we'll get at least some portion of that money back," Barber said last month.

Find it all online bendbulletin.com

Unwilling to wait for Republicans who argue Biden's price

Hotel

Continued from A11

The new hotel falls under Palisociety's independent collection, which also includes Los Angeles' Silver Lake Pool & Inn, and attempts to "represent an elevated reflection of the creative movements and

Blueberries

Continued from A11

Associations representing commodities that depend on overseas customers — such as apples, wheat and soybeans argue that tariffs on foreign blueberries could lead to retaliSenate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer of N.Y., left, speaks to the media with Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., right, on Tuesday in Washington.

tag is too high and his priorities too wide-ranging, Democrats are flexing their newfound power as they take control of the Senate alongside the House and White House.

It is the first time in a decade the party has held the full sweep of power in Washington, and Democrats say they have no time to waste trying to broker compromises with Republicans that may, or may not, happen. They have watched Republicans use similar procedural tools to advance their

quirky spirit of Portland, and

beyond," according to the hotel's

website. Hotel Grand Stark will

have 57 rooms. Restoration of

the century-old masonry build-

ing, which operated as a hotel

through a partnership between

Beam Development and Urban

into the 1970s, was overseen

Development and Partners.

priorities, most recently the Trump administration's GOP tax cuts.

Jacquelyn Martin/AP

The fast-moving events days into the new majority on Capitol Hill come as the White House continued meeting privately with groups of Republican and Democratic lawmakers in hopes of striking a bipartisan agreement. Biden's COVID-19 aid package includes money for vaccine distribution, school reopenings and \$1,400 direct payments to households and gradually

Grand Stark Deli, the hotel's in-house deli, will serve "an approachable all-day menu," according to the hotel website, with fresh baked English muffins, assorted schmears, housecured salmon gravlax, breakfast sandwiches as well as deli soups, salads and sandwiches with

"thinly sliced meats piled high."

Bar Chamberlain, a "classic hotel bar" will feature "expertly crafted cocktails" a "largely natural wine list" and throwback hotel restaurant dishes such as burgers, roasted chicken, steak au poivre, crispy oysters, shrimp cocktails and "towering Cae-

ation that hurts other sectors of U.S. agriculture.

R-CALF's opposing view was signed by groups such as the Cattle Producers of Washington and the Stevens County Cattlemen's Association, whose members raise beef for U.S. consumers.

The letter was also signed by groups representing rural residents, small farms and U.S. manufacturers, including the Coalition for a Prosperous America.

Prosperous America CEO Michael Stumo said the U.S. shouldn't base its trade policy on fears about what smaller countries will do. "Otherwise we're just wimps," he said.

sar salads to be eaten with your

hands," the hotel website says.

Stumo said he expects the Biden administration to be open to protecting blueberry farmers. "I don't think the administration change will make a difference in this case," he said.