

CAPITAL BUREAU

Oregon may lose its wildfire insurance policy

By Hillary Borrud
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Lawmakers working on the next two-year budget say that one of the major challenges they face is how to pay for firefighting costs.

They're worried a company that has previously sold the state an insurance policy to help cover firefighting costs will either refuse to issue such a policy this year, or the deductible will be so high that it no longer makes sense for the state to purchase insurance.

Oregon usually purchases a policy from Lloyd's, the London insurance company, to help

cover firefighting costs; the state uses its tax-supported general fund and landowner contributions to cover the remaining firefighting costs not paid for by the federal government.

"The other wild card that hasn't really come up in discussion much is fire season costs," said Rep. Peter Buckley, D-Ashland, co-chair of the Joint Ways and Means Committee.

"It is unlikely we will receive the same sort of fire insurance coverage we have received in the past from Lloyd's of London," he said. "They will either want a lot more money up front for the policy, or they will place it in such a



Grant County Sheriff's Department

The state of Oregon may lose its wildfire insurance coverage as rising premiums and deductibles could make the policy unaffordable.

way our deductible is so high that it's not going to make financial sense for us to continue. So that's a significant challenge in the tens of millions of dollars we have to be aware of for fire seasons going forward as part of the budget."

Sen. Fred Girod, R-Lyons, said Lloyd's initial offer would have provided only \$19 mil-

lion in coverage to the state after Oregon put up more than twice that amount in deductibles and payouts — a deal he says would not be worth it.

Girod, who is on the budget committee, says negotiations are continuing.

This story first appeared in the Oregon Capital Insider newsletter. To subscribe, go to oregoncapitalinsider.com

Fuel producers, truckers sue to block fuel standard

By Hillary Borrud
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Fuel producers and truckers are suing to stop Oregon from implementing the state's low-carbon fuel standard.

Industry groups filed a federal lawsuit in the U.S. District Court in Portland on Monday against Gov. Kate Brown, members of the Oregon Environmental Quality Commission and employees of the state Department of Environmental Quality. The plaintiffs asked the court to issue a preliminary injunction to stop the state from implementing the program while the case proceeds.

A similar federal lawsuit in California slowed the roll-out of that state's low-carbon fuel program but did not stop it.

The Western States Petroleum Association already filed a challenge to the low-carbon fuel program at the Oregon Court of Appeals earlier this month.

The state Environmental Quality Commission voted in January to adopt regulations that will require fuel importers and producers to reduce the carbon content of transportation fuels by 10 percent during the next decade, starting in January 2016. The rules were based on a 2009 bill, which was set to sunset this year before the state could implement the program.

Lawmakers passed the controversial Senate Bill 324 earlier this year to make the program

permanent, and Gov. Kate Brown signed the bill into law March 12. Brown did not immediately respond to a request for comment Monday afternoon on whether the lawsuit might affect the state's implementation of the low-carbon fuel standard.

In a court filing Monday, lawyers for the American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers, American Trucking Associations, Inc., and Consumer Energy Alliance said the low-carbon fuel standard violates the commerce clause of the U.S. Constitution because it discriminates against fuel imported into the state and attempts to regulate fuel production activities outside Oregon.

For example, the plaintiffs stated the Oregon program was designed to close the state's fuel market to certain types of corn ethanol and other renewable fuels and therefore interferes with "the congressional purpose of ensuring a continued market nationwide for this corn ethanol."

The groups also stated the Oregon low-carbon fuel program is pre-empted by federal laws including the Clean Air Act and federal renewable fuel standard.

The Western States Petroleum Association filed a petition March 9 asking the Oregon Court of Appeals to review the low-carbon fuel standard regulations the environmental commission adopted in January based on the existing state law.

the corner's HOT SHOT OF THE WEEK

SOPHIA PETTIT
School: Monument
Grade: 8
Parents: Earl and Nittaya Pettit
Sport: Track & Field

Events: 100-meter, 200, long jump, triple jump
What I like best about my sport: "I like that it's an individual sport. I also like the variety of events that you can do."
Coach's Comment: "She has a desire to take risks, and she stays focused in the meets and always does her best. She's really coachable — she's always willing to try something new and if I ask her to change a little bit in any of her events, she always accepts advice."
— Coach Treila Osborne

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Lady Pros take to the field

Team faces tough Rockets team

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — The Grant Union softball team experienced ups and downs last weekend.

The team had big wins in Culver Friday, topping the Bulldogs 14-2 and 20-2 in a doubleheader.

At home on Saturday the team played well, but fell to the strong Pilot Rock/Nixyaawii Rockets 2-9 and 1-5.

Head coach Deanna Nash said the team had a good day



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Grant Union Prospector Cody Jo Madden winds up for the pitch in Saturday's game against Pilot Rock/Nixyaawii.

against Culver, hitting the ball well and executing the game.

"Our inexperience showed a little today," she said after the game with the Rockets. "Pilot Rock is a state playoff team, and we hung well with them."

She added that while the team made some difficult plays, the bats didn't come

through as well.

One of many highlights for the day came when Cody Jo Madden was at the mound.

The Rockets had the bases loaded and Mariah Meyerholz caught a fly ball in center field then threw to catcher Babe Nash for an out at home.

That play was followed by Sydney Stearns catching an out in left field.

Stearns also shared mound duties for the day.

New to the Prospector team are a couple players from other schools, Ravyn Walker from Dayville School and Brianna Zwegyardt from Prairie City School.

"Both are great kids, and they've been accepted by the team," Nash said. "It's been a good mix of kids, and they've melded well. I'm super excited about where we're at, and we're going to have a lot of girls continue to improve in a short period of time."

Grant Union takes this week off for spring break, then travels to Heppner for a doubleheader at 2 p.m. Tuesday, March 31, and hosts Elgin at 1 p.m. Friday, April 3, for a doubleheader.

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Nominate your Local Hero by picking up a nomination form at the Blue Mountain Eagle or Doug's Repair, or download a copy from the Blue Mountain Eagle's website — www.bluemountaineagle.com.

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Nooners Senior League:
Men High Game: Doug Kruse 180
Men High Series: Doug Kruse 502
Women High Game: Chris Rowe 163
Women High Series: Chris Rowe 467

March 19
Thursday Mixed 2K15:
Men High Game: Grant Benton 237
Men High Series: Grant Benton 630
Women High Game: Jamie Benton & Cheryl Leighton 140
Women High Series: Cheryl Leighton 399

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