



# Old wounds of timber wars take first step toward healing

Landmark deal between timber industry and environmental community hinges on legislation around aerial spraying

By Sam Stites  
Oregon Capital Bureau

The deal announced last week was intended to end the war in the woods that has beset Oregon forestry issues for decades.

But not everyone is cheering what Gov. Kate Brown described as a "historic" deal between timber firms and environmentalists. The critics suspect something is more at play than the pursuit of peace.

Some characterize the agreement

signed by several Oregon timber companies and a coalition of environmental groups as the first step in healing, but it also has bearing on much broader discussions in the Capitol, particularly over climate change.

"There are people who had the rug pulled out from under them 30 years ago, and they never really recovered," said Sen. Jeff Golden. "That makes what we're trying to do with the climate bill hard for them to accept. It's interesting that all this is coming together at the same time. The question



Sen. Jeff Golden, D-Ashland, left, and Sen. Herman Baertschiger Jr., R-Grants Pass, both sit on the Senate's committee on wildfire, but have different takes on what the agreement between timber interests and environmental groups means for Oregon.

Oregon Capital Bureau/Sam Stites

for those of us with a gavel is how to make the most of it."

The opening came after representatives of the timber industry reached out

to Brown and sat down for a meeting with her staff on Jan. 9. They requested that the governor moderate a discussion between industry leaders and the

environmental community on moving forward as partners rather than adversaries.

The governor agreed, mediating four meetings from Monday, Jan. 27, to Wednesday, Feb. 5, in Portland and in Salem. Representatives from both sides aired long-standing grievances, explained their views and then considered how they might proceed together.

What emerged was a memorandum of agreement signed by 13 of the most reputable Oregon companies and organizations on either side of the debate. It also means both sides will drop dueling sets of proposed ballot initiatives, which seemed destined for an

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# THE CHANGING FACE OF RURAL COUNTY FAIRS

Carnival closure may mark the beginning of the end for that industry, but the ag-based tradition of county fairs will live on

By Steven Mitchell  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Eating cotton candy. Riding the tilt-a-whirl. Trying to win a massive stuffed animal. For years, memories of most county fairs have been entwined with their carnivals, but that could be changing.

The company contracted to provide the carnival at last year's Grant County Fair backed out at the last minute, and the fair has not yet found a replacement for this year. As of mid-January, at least eight other county fairs in Oregon were also without a carnival.

With carnival company closures and budget constraints, rural fairs of the future may create different memories for the next generation of fairgoers.

### The situation

Grant County Fair Manager Mindy Winegar said the problem is more significant than just Grant County.

At this year's Oregon Fair Association convention last month in Roseburg, Winegar said she met with managers from Lincoln, Baker, Harney, Union, Malheur, Wasco and Umatilla county fairs, all of whom were without a carnival, to find solutions.

Jefferson and Clatsop county fair officials also attended the meeting, and were both without carnivals at the time, but have since secured deals with carnival providers.

In Union County, Fairgrounds Manager Margaret Spence said this year will be the first year in

over 30 years that the county's fair will not have a carnival, and she's not hopeful about the county having a carnival in future years.

She said the fair will take a big hit without the carnival, which provides a significant portion of the fair's revenue. There is also a big piece of nostalgia that gets lost without the carnival, Spence said.

"At night, you would see the lights from the carnival from the freeway, and that is what would bring people out and keep them coming back," she said. "The loss of a carnival will change the face of small county fairs as we know it."

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EO Media Group file photo Miguel Rojas pushes a roller coaster car off of the starting platform to allow for further construction of the Davis Amusement Cascadia roller coaster during a setup day for the Umatilla County Fair in August 2019.



EO Media Group file photo Jacob Ginn, 5, reaches for a rubber duck in a carnival game at the Umatilla County Fair in 2019.

# Lawmakers reconsider banning Oregon coyote-hunting contests

By Mateusz Perkowski  
EO Media Group

The Oregon Hunters Association is willing to drop its opposition to a bill banning coyote-hunting competitions if it exempts raffles that don't reward the "number, weight or size" of animals killed.

House Bill 4075 would prohibit any contest that offers cash or prizes for the killing of coyotes. It is similar to a proposal that was voted down in the Oregon House after passing the Senate last year.

An amendment to this year's proposal would exclude raffles held by nonprofit organizations, such as local chapters of the Oregon Hunters Association that exchange raffle tickets for coyote pelts submitted by members.

At the end of the year, the winning ticket holder receives a prize, but the contest isn't directly related to the "number, weight or size of the coyotes taken" as specified by the amendment.

Though the Oregon Hunters Association wouldn't oppose HB 4075 with that exception, the organization nonetheless didn't sound enthused about the proposal during a Feb. 11 hearing before the House Natural Resources Committee.

"This bill does not achieve a compelling state interest in our opinion," said Paul Donheffner, the group's legislative committee chairman.

The prohibition against coyote-hunting contests amounts to an attempt to legislate a moral or philosophical point of view, but the U.S. Constitution protects speech and activities that others may dislike, Donheffner said.

However, the Oregon Hunters Association understands the "optics" of large commercial coyote-hunting contests, which are the bill's primary targets, and appreciates the proposed exemption for raffles that are essential to the culture of its local chapters, he said.

The Oregon Farm Bureau opposed

the original version of HB 4075 but hasn't yet decided whether the proposed amendment would change its position on the bill, said Mary Anne Cooper, the group's vice president of public policy.

County governments have less money available for predator control, and large coyote populations pose a danger to livestock producers in Oregon, Cooper said. "We want to preserve any tool available to us."

Most of the testimony heard during the legislative hearing supported the ban, with critics of coyote-hunting contests claiming these competitions are ethically and scientifically indefensible.

Removing predators such as coyotes from a territory will just encourage increased reproduction by remaining pack members and the immigration of coyotes from surrounding areas, said Robert Wielgus, former director of Washington State University's Large Carnivore Conservation Laboratory.

"The remaining members of the

pack become breeders. That's how you end up with more predation down the road on livestock," Wielgus said.

Numerous studies have shown that killing coyotes isn't effective for livestock protection, as even eliminating three-fourths of the carnivore's population from an area only had short-term benefits, he said.

"You're on a never-ending treadmill of livestock depredation and wild game depredation," Wielgus said. "Scientifically, there is no basis for it."

Rene Tatro, who identified himself as a hunter, said he supported the prohibition in part because such contests reflect poorly on the hunting community. The vast majority of Oregonians don't hunt, so negative public perceptions could have repercussions for the sport, he said.

"We're going to lose that privilege," he said. "This isn't about abridging our rights to hunt, it's about preserving them."