Preliminary injunction halts labor measure for additional review

Columbia County Circuit Court Judge Ted E. Grove issued a preliminary injunction, January 30, preventing an anti-immigrant ballot measure from taking effect on February 2.

Columbia County Ballot Measure 5-190 was approved by voters in November, but was challenged in court by a coalition of Columbia County business owners and voters who are represented by attorneys for the ACLU of Oregon and the Northwest Workers' Justice Project.

The ACLU/NWJP challenge contends that Measure 1-590, which would fine employers for hiring or employing undocumented immigrants, exceeds the powers of Columbia County as granted by the state of Oregon, violates the Single Subject requirement of the Oregon Constitution, and is preempted by existing state laws, as well as land-use statutes and regulations. Also at issue in the court challenge are amendments to the initiative that were approved by the county Board of Commissioners in December.

Judge Grove issued the injunction so he can review the issues in more detail. He did not indicate when he would issue an opinion.

Measure 5-190 relies on E-Verify, a federal database designed to check employees' names against Social Security records. Legal challenges at the federal level claim the database has proven to be flawed, ineffective and cumbersome. One transposed digit or misspelled name could flag even longtime citizens as "illegal."

Proponent Wayne Mayo, a local building contractor, has said he modeled the measure on Arizona's Legal Worker Act, which has passed some court scrutiny, but faces continued challenges regarding its constitutionality. Arizona has spent more than $75,000 in legal fees to defend the law and has budgeted $2.6 million for enforcement and notification this fiscal year. Similar measures in Hazelton, Pa.; Farmers Branch, Texas; Escondido, Calif; and other jurisdictions already have been struck down.

The coalition of organizations and individuals that initiated the local legal challenge includes the Rural Organizing Project, Columbia County Citizens for Human Dignity, Columbia County business owner and resident Gary Liao, CAUSA Immigrant Rights Coalition, and others.

"We are delighted with the court's ruling today," said Liao, "and we are optimistic the court will make the order permanent sometime soon."

"We hope this court action will be resolved soon so that attention on the immigration issue can be re-directed where it belongs: on the federal government's responsibility to carry out meaningful immigration reform," said Marcy Westerling, Director of the Rural Organizing Project in Scappoose.

Approval given for zone change

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existing private road for access, the affect of industrial development on wetlands and wildlife, and livability issues.

On January 28, the Commissioners unanimously, though tentatively, approved the zone change. Each of the commissioners – Tony Hyde, Rita Bernhard and Earl Fisher – said that the neighbors' concerns were important and need to be addressed when site plans are submitted to the planning commission for review, prior to anything being done to the site. The commissioners also directed staff to include a prohibition against any firearms discharge on the property.

Commissioner Bernhard, in a statement prior to approving the change said, "I believe most issues can be taken care of in future processes. One of the big things for me was the neighbors' concerns. I think that's something we didn't take lightly, but the bottom line is [that] this is an airport and it's going to expand and there will be changes and development that will be handled during site review considerations."

The next step is for county counsel and staff to draft the language for the zone change. No specific date was set for when the final language might return to the Commissioners for approval.

Community Calendar

VERNONIA

Alcoholics Anonymous	Monday	6:30 p.m., 410 North Street
American Legion Post #119	2nd Thursday	7:00 p.m., 627 Adams Avenue
Arts & Crafts Society	2nd Thursday	2:00 p.m., City Library
Booster Club	2nd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., VHS Library
Boy Scout Troop 201	Tuesdays	7:00 p.m., Scout Cabin
Boy Scout Troop 860	Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., LDS Church
Cemetery Beautification Comm.	2nd Thursday	6:30 p.m., City Hall
CERT	4th Wednesday	For Info Call 503-429-3018
Chamber of Commerce	2nd Wednesday	For Info Call 503-429-6081
Community Coalition	2nd Monday	12:30 p.m. School District Ofc.
Cub Scout Pack 201	Scout Cabin	For Info Call 503-429-4250
Friends of the Library	1st Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Vernonia Library
Girl Scouts, Neighborhood 4-2		For Info Call 503-819-0143
Hands On Art Committee	1st & 3rd Thursdays	4:00 p.m., City Hall
Izaak Walton League	3rd Thursday	For location call 503-429-7193
Lions Club	1st & 3rd Tuesdays	6:30 p.m., Buckhorn Restaurant
Municipal Airport Committee	4th Thursday	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Narcotics Anonymous	Saturdays	7:00 p.m., 410 North Street
Pioneer Museum		For Info Call 503-429-3713
Public Works Committee	4th Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Cares Directors		For Info call 503-429-1414
Vernonia City Council	1st & 3rd Mondays	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Community PTA	2nd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., WGS Library
Vernonia Grange	3rd Monday	7:00 p.m., Grange Hall
Vernonia Health Center	2nd Monday	6:00 p.m., 510 Bridge St.
Vernonia Learning Center	1st Wednesday	6:00 p.m., VLC
Vernonia Parks Committee	3rd Wednesday	6:30 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Planning Comm.	1st & 3rd Thursdays	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Pride	3rd Thursday	1:00 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Ridge Riders	Last Thursday	7:00 p.m., Senior Center
Vernonia RFPD Board	2nd Tuesday	6:00 p.m., Fire Station
Vernonia School Board	2nd Thursday	6:00 p.m., District Office
Vernonia Sr. Center Board	2nd Friday	1:00 p.m., Senior Center
Vernonia Transfer Station	2nd & 4th Saturdays, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.	Behind VHS
Vern. Volunteer Ambulance Assoc.	1st, 3rd & 4th Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Fire Station
Vernonia Volunteer Firefighters	2nd Monday	7:00 p.m., Fire Station
WOEC Directors	3rd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., WOEC

MIST-BIRKENFELD

M-BRFPD Board Business Mtg.	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-BRFPD Board Workshop	4th Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Ambulance Drill	1st & 2nd Thursdays	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Fire Drill	1st & 2nd Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Helping Circle	2nd Monday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B SAR Drill	3rd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Volunteer Assoc.	1st Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
Natal Grange	2nd Wednesday	7:30 p.m., Natal Grange Hall
T.O.P.S.	Mondays	6:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
Upr Nehalem Watershed Council	For date call 429-2401	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station

BANKS

Alcoholics Anonymous	Fridays	7:30 p.m., Methodist Church
Alcoholics Anonymous	Wednesdays	7:30 p.m., Methodist Church
American Legion Post #90	2nd Tuesdays	7:30 p.m., Main Street Post
Banks City Council	2nd Tuesday	7:30 p.m., City Hall
Banks Fire District #13	2nd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., Station 13
Banks Library Commission	3rd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Library
Banks Planning Commission	Last Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Banks School Board	2nd Monday	7:30 p.m., Jr. High Library
Banks Youth Group	Sundays, Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., UMC Youth Bldg.
Chamber of Commerce	1st Thursday	12:30 p.m., Fire District Office
CPO 14	3rd Monday	7:00 p.m., City Library
Friends of the Library	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Library
Lions Club	1st & 3rd Mondays	7:00 p.m., Brown Derby
Sunset Park Assoc.	3rd Wednesday	8:00 p.m., Gun Club
T.O.P.S.	Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., Administration Bldg.

COLUMBIA COUNTY (All meet in St. Helens unless otherwise noted.)

Board of Commissioners	Wednesdays	10 a.m., Courthouse
Citizens for Senior Justice	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Sunset Park Church
Columbia Soil & Water District	3rd Wednesday	7:30 p.m., NRCS , 2514 Sykes
County Fair Board	2nd Monday	7:00 p.m., Fairgrounds 4-H Bldg.
County Parks Commission	3rd Tuesday	Times vary, 1054 Oregon St.
Mental Health Advisory Comm.	Quarterly	For Info call 503-397-7211
Comm. on Children & Families	3rd Thursday	5:30 p.m. OSU Ext., 505 N. Hwy. 30
Local Alcohol & Drug Plann. Comm.	Quarterly	For Info call 503-397-7211

Organizations and meeting dates not listed may be included by calling 429-9410 or by mail to The INDEPENDENT, 725 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR 97064.