



Legislative Report

February 25, 2015

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2015 Legislative Session

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**Meet the newly
inaugurated
Governor Kate
Brown**

Social Policy

Health Care

Last week in **Senate Health Care**: [SB 1](#) dissolves Cover Oregon, the public corporation for the health insurance exchange, and transfers the program to the Department of Consumer and Business Services. This Department already contains the Insurance Division so it is a logical fit. Consumers apply for the subsidy program on the federal site, but the state manages the connections and subsidy. The bill passed the Senate floor already and is headed to the House floor.



*Karen Nibler, Social
Policy Coordinator*

In **House Health Care**: [HB 2297](#) establishes a Task Force on Children's Mental Health, which requires agencies to research science-based programs and report back to the legislature in 2016. A letter with comments on the use of staff and financial resources for this purpose was submitted ([link to letter](#)). The bill passed out of committee without objection but will be reviewed in Ways and Means.

[HB 2546](#), the e-cigarette regulation bill, was amended and passed to the House floor for a vote. The League sent testimony last session. This session the bill was expanded and ready to move early.

[HB 2825](#) creates a fund for housing for mentally ill people in communities. This is a great need in most of our local league communities. A letter was submitted in support ([click here to read](#)). Link Amendments are pending so the bill has not been passed. A Ways and Means referral will be made because of the financial decision.

House Human Services heard from representatives of the Children's Alliance on [HB 2232](#). This bill requested an Advisory Committee for the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program within the Department of Human Services. Those who testified wanted additional funds or expansion of the program to accommodate more homeless youth and to prevent harm. The League submitted a letter in support of



[Click here for video link](#)

**February 25
Measures requested
by January 16 must
be filed with the
Secretary of the
Senate or Chief
Clerk in order to be
Introduced.**

Coming Soon!
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LWVOR's
Day at the
Legislature!**
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the Advisory Committee and expansion of the program ([click here to read](#)).

The **Oregon Community and Housing Services Department** has been under scrutiny during the past session and interim session, and decisions have been made to reorganize and rename the board. The Food Bank programs and the Hunger Task Force will be transferred to the Department of Human Services. The Department retains housing, weatherization, energy, homeless assistance programs. The bill containing these stipulations in [HB 2442](#) was amended and passed to the House floor on Friday. The League has been following these developments in the past session and testified on the Budget bills.

Public Safety bills in the hopper are [SJR 4](#) which eliminates the mandatory retirement age at 75 for judges. Most who testified were opposed to age discrimination. The bill passed from Senate Judiciary to Senate Rules for a decision on placement on the ballot for election.

Bills are pending on increases in judicial salaries for Circuit Courts, Appeals Court and Supreme Court Judges. The Oregon Youth Authority is the next up agency budget in Ways and Means Public Safety.

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Natural Resources

Climate Change Front and Center

ALERT: Clean Fuels ([SB 324](#)-thanks to [Claudia Keith for testimony](#)) **passed the Senate**. Hearing in House Environment and Energy on Feb. 24. [Please tell your State Representative to vote in support of this important climate bill](#) and ask Governor Brown to sign the bill.



Peggy Lynch, Natural Resources Coordinator

The League testified in support of [SB 262](#) which would increase Vessel Fees for Dept. of Environmental Quality's **Oil Spill Prevention/Preparedness Program**. The testimony included very specific language and charts about vessel and rail oil transport safety statistics. We will also support [SB 271](#), specific to raising fees for Rail Oil Transit Safety. Neither bill is sufficient to recognize the true public safety issues, but the passage of SB 262 would keep the 4 DEQ staffers available for spill preparedness training.

At the Feb. 19th Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) meeting, staff announced proposed rule changes to

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Meeting Basic Human Needs Position

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Conservation
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"improve planning for and response to spills of hazardous materials, including crude oil". **Public meetings will be held in Portland, Bend, Pendleton and Klamath Falls with tentative adoption at the OTC July 16-17 meeting in Hillsboro.** League members are asked to attend to express your concern about rail safety. See <http://portlandtribune.com/pt/9-news/251301-120431-public-to-weigh-in-on-train-shipments> for more information.

Other Natural Resource Issues

The League provided information to the members of the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee on Feb. 16 (see video on OLIS) on [SB 24](#), related to creating a Task Force on Natural Resource Agency Consolidation. The League has followed this discussion since the 1980s and provided members with our testimony in 2013 of HB 2620 and a 2009 letter on possible consolidation of water related agencies. We requested additional members on any such Task Force and a broad public outreach, education and participation as part of this effort.

We opposed [SB 201](#) and [SB 203](#), creating new positions called "alignment coordinators", positions meant to help agencies work together. The League believes agencies already do this and creation of these positions would be yet another layer of government. We also expressed concern about [SB 210](#) that would allow all agencies to have "reimbursement authority"-the ability to allow collection of fees from applicants wanting quick turnaround of their applications and allowing agencies to bill other agencies for the work they might do on behalf of those other agencies. We are interested in working with others to address the need for the Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife to be reimbursed for the scientific information they provide to others. But have concerns about just moving General Funds around among agencies.

Appeals fees for land use permits are a perennial League issue. [SB 359](#) would limit the amount of fee a city or county may charge. The League will provide testimony in support on Feb. 25th in Senate Judiciary ([read the testimony](#)). (Paula: I'll have the testimony done by the weekend so you can link by LR publish date.)

[SB 25](#) has been proposed to allow **8 Eastern Oregon counties** to "opt out" of our land use planning program. The agriculture land in these counties is critical to their economic well-being; therefore, the League provided [testimony](#) in opposition.

Since administrative rules are important implementing mechanisms for natural resource agencies, the League opposed [HB 2724](#) that would have allowed agencies to waive a rule on a "case-by-case" basis. The bill, originally scheduled for a public hearing, was pulled from the agenda.

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**President Obama
VETOS XL Pipeline.**
League of Women Voters
Supported the veto.
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**Legislative budget
writers want the
revenue committees
to squeeze \$64
million worth of
expiring Oregon tax
credits in \$14
million made
available on their
budget framework
for the next two
years.**

**[Click here to read
Portland Tribune
Article.](#)**

We are also concerned about [HB 2476](#) allowing the Dept. of Administrative Services to adopt uniform policies or procedures for multiple agencies. The bill seems overbroad and not well defined.

The Dept. of Agriculture budget bill ([HB 5002](#)) will be heard this coming week with public testimony due on Feb. 26. The League will be supporting those programs related to protecting agricultural lands, to assuring abundant clean water for all, assuring our public facilities are not damaged by invasive species (which would cost us all millions) and that government has the responsibility for public safety. We will oppose funding of the "alignment coordinator" in their budget. (See SB 201 above.)

Our Watch List: [SB 94](#), [SB 358](#), [SB 527](#), [SB 537](#), [SB 534](#), [HB 2039](#), [HB 2235](#), [HB 2267](#), [HB 2295](#), [HB 2443](#), [HB 2453](#), [HB 2456](#), [HB 2457](#), [HB 2620](#), [HB 2633](#), [HB 2666](#), [HB 2724](#), [HB 2800](#), [HB 2808](#), [HB 2829](#), [HB 2830](#), [HB 2831](#), [HB 2881](#), [HJM 7](#) and [SJM 7](#), [SJR 10](#), [SJR 13](#). For information about these bills, please read them at the [Oregon Legislature website](#) or contact **Peggy Lynch**: zuludar@aol.com.

Climate Watch List: [SB 20](#), [SB 22](#), [SB 23](#), [HB 2447](#).
Coal to Clean: [HB 2729](#) or [SB 477](#). Carbon Tax: [HB 2082](#).
For information about these bills, please read them at the Oregon Legislature website or contact **Claudia Keith**: ca.keith@comcast.net

Forestry Watch List: [SB 257](#) & [SB 613](#). For information about these bills, please read them at the Oregon Legislature website or contact **Jen Haynes**: Jennifer.A.Haynes@comcast.net

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Governance

Tax Kickers, Campaign Donor Regulations and Motor Voter

With both personal income tax and corporate income tax revenues up over 2% from the projected end of session, June 30, 2015, **the March 2015 forecast** indicates a personal kicker of \$349.3 million and a corporate kicker of \$55.7 million. Under the Oregon Constitution, the personal surplus must be returned to individual taxpayers, and the corporate surplus goes into the General Fund, marked for public education. Under a recent statute, the personal funds will be distributed as a tax credit rather than by check. The projections this early in the budget process for the 2015-17



*Kappy Eaton,
Governance
Coordinator*

biennia will assist the Ways and Means committee in preparing their final adopted budget.

We expect [SJR 5](#) and [SB 75](#) to be heard within the next two weeks. These address the problem of independent expenditures in support of candidates outside the regular party-related dollars from supported individual and group donors who are identified. SJR 5 is the constitutional amendment to allow the Legislature to regulate such contributions, and SB 75 is the implementing statute. [HB 2177](#), **Motor Voter registration**, was passed by the House on partisan lines, 35-24, on February 20, and slated for a Senate vote on February 26, with no committee hearing.

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