



# Legislative Report

March 14, 2014

Volume 24, Number 2

## 2014 Legislative Sine Die

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### Governance

#### Thirty-five Days: Oregon's Winter of Discontent

More than 200 bills introduced, seriously controversial issues, days of snow, rain, ice, wind, major amendments slow to posting, one hour hearing notices, late/cancelled committee meetings, the sense of hurried, behind-closed-doors decisions, and the mantra of "It ain't over 'till the fat lady sings" - that is the legacy of the 2014 Annual session of the 77th Oregon Assembly. *Sine Die* finally occurred at 5 p.m. March 7, after a long day of Senate/House measure interchanges and re-concurrence votes.



*Kappy Eaton,  
Governance  
Coordinator*

Were there accomplishments? Of course. Were there bi-partisan decisions? Yes. But there also were questions about just how much can be accomplished in an elongated month, about whether subject matter should be limited, and should the number of proposals be limited. And there was a discussion about an amendment to the Constitution to increase the number of days for the even-numbered year sessions and shorten the days for the odd-years session ([SJR 201](#)). Because of time limitations, that discussion will continue during the Interim hearings prior to the 78th Oregon Assembly in 2015.

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#### Election Issues : Mixed Bag

The League gave [priority](#) to the passage of [SB 1544](#) which made some key changes to the Citizen Initiative Review Commission. Instead of four former initiative panel moderators and two former panel members being required on the Commission, there will be four former panel members and two former moderators, giving more hands-on experience to the Commission. Further, panel discussions can take place between three and five days,

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instead of only five, and the sunset on the Commission was removed. There was excellent bi-partisan support.

The following is the saga of two election bills, [SB 1504](#) and [SB 1515](#). The usual omnibus elections system "housekeeping" measure, [SB 1504](#), passed the Senate 20-9, and the House 41-17. It has several parts:

- updating violations that prevent persons from gathering signatures,
- allowing the name of a candidate seeking two positions to appear more than once on the ballot,
- allowing electioneering to occur near an elections office outside of business hours,
- allowing a person to show another a marked ballot, and
- allowing a person submitting an unsigned ballot to remain on the active vote list.

[SB 1515](#) would establish a work group to study the feasibility of electronic voting. While it passed the Senate, 18-11, it stalled in the House Rules committee because of stiff citizen opposition, and the committee discussed having an informal work group organized by the Secretary of State. Then came fruit basket upset with the contents of [SB 1504](#) being stuffed into [SB 1515A](#), eliminating the electronic voting study, and adding an emergency clause. The Senate passed the amended version and the House concurred at the last minute.

Two other election bills of interest to the League did not move forward, but are likely to reappear in the 2015 session. [SB 1564](#) would:

- establish defective ballot boards in each county elections office to inspect ballots rejected by the tally system,
- require additional security records from the county clerk, and
- require the Secretary of State to develop a system ensuring the security and integrity of ballots collected and delivered by a third party.

It was heard in Senate Rules and not moved.

[HB 4060](#) called for additional proof of residency for first-time voter registrants and persons updating their registration, and requiring the Secretary of State to conduct a study on how to ensure that currently registered electors have provided acceptable evidence of residency. It was not heard.

The League likely would oppose these measures.

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## 2014 Legislative Session Tally

266  
Measures Introduced

164  
Passed by the House

149  
Passed by the Senate

25  
Signed by the Governor

To see all the bills  
[Click Here](#)

## 2014 Oregon Legislative Interim Days

**May 28-30**  
**September 15-17**  
**December 8-10**

"Legislative Days" or "Interim Days" are special meeting days held between sessions.

Interim Committees may hold informational hearings on topics that could lead to legislation in the next session or Committees may hear

## Post-Secondary Education: More System Building Blocks

Students were particularly active in supporting [HB 4019B](#), which contained a list of significant information required to be presented to students prior to enrollment at any Oregon public higher education institution. Included were:

- program requirements,
- costs of education,
- average wage or salary, and
- loan default rates.



After discussion in both House and Senate Higher Ed committees, with referral to Ways and Means because of the research difficulty and expenses of obtaining such data, the bill was amended twice, and passed. It now allows for a general data sheet to be produced, based on research done by various groups across the country.

[HB 4018B](#) is a revised university governance bill that squeaked through just before adjournment. It provides for the four regional higher education institutions to have internal boards if they apply before May 15, 2014. A process is provided, along with approval from the State Board of Higher Education. The bill also provides for commingling of funds between institutions that have boards through a Public University Fund under the jurisdiction of the State Treasurer.

[HB 4116B](#) passed both chambers with no negative votes, and received Ways and Means approval for \$750,000 from the General Fund. Retroactively to July 1, 2013, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission and the Community Colleges/Workforce Development Department are to establish a grant program for distributing moneys to community colleges directed to increase the number of low-income, first generation college students enrolled and progressing toward degrees or certificates.

[SB 1524B](#) requires the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to determine the viability of allowing Oregon High school graduates or students completing 12 years of study to attend an Oregon community college without paying tuition or fees for a specified period of time. HECC has until September 30, 2014 to report viability. The commission is to research the possible number of students, the annual cost, possible sources of money, current capacity of community colleges to enroll new students and criteria for eligibility. If the program is found viable, HECC is to develop criteria to accompany its report.

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updates on implementation of past legislation. This time is also used to investigate topic areas, hear reports from agencies and Task Forces, and keep current on the subject areas of the Committees.

The League Action Team stays active during this time keeping on top of issues that may arise for the 2015 session.

## Celebrate Women's History Month

Find out how the League is celebrating and share a comment on what you will be doing to help celebrate.

[Click Here](#)



## A Special Thank You to Theresa Gibney, Natural Resources Volunteer

Many thanks to Theresa Gibney for her work on energy and climate issues the last four years.

Although she is going back to full employment, she will continue to follow these issues as her time allows. Due to her hard work, the League had a voice in a number of important energy bills. She also worked to assure the public's interest is protected as Oregon participates in the West Coast Infrastructure Exchange.

## Fiscal Policy: Last, But Not Least

A few major monetary issues were not decided until the brink of the session's end, and some bills were both passed and repassed.

Noteworthy is [SB 1534C](#), some needed corrections to the "Grand Bargain" enacted during the 2013 Special Session and review promised by legislators at the time. The law deals with:



- changes to Oregon's senior medical tax subtraction,
- tax treatment for small domestic international sales corporations, and
- corrections for the distribution of proceeds from the increased cigarette tax.

Both the House and Senate Revenue committees spent hours hearing testimony, receiving Legislative Revenue Office reports, amending and reworking the proposal. Things such as exemptions for certain disabled tax payers and disabled children, going back to include 2013 in calculations, actually lowering small business taxes, and technical "fixes" were included in the revisions. It finally passed just before the final budget votes.

[SB 5703A](#) was another cliff-hanger with extensive consequences that passed late on March 7 with emotional floor speeches. Probably best known to the public as the Oregon Health and Science University's (OHSU) cancer center construction bill, with a \$500 million donation from Phil Knight (Nike) at stake, it also went back and forth between sessions of both chambers and considerable work by the Senate Finance and Revenue committee. There are several projects included in the measure, with state-wide implications and economic/medical support beyond Portland and OHSU, as various legislators pointed out. Job creation, clinical trials, medical outreach and protection, as well as an emphasis on minority women contractors are included, benefiting areas such as Beaverton, Cornelius, Stayton, and Klamath Falls among others. One contentious area was the \$200 million bonding authority for OHSU's cancer institute, and the argument by the three House opponents that such funding was more needed for schools and gambling addiction programs. There is a budget note for the Oregon Health Authority to provide oversight.

Aiding low income home owners who are part of the senior property tax deferral program, the interest rate for taxes advanced was changed to 6% per annum from 6% compounded annually in [HB 4148](#). Various other tax proposals, such as allowing subtractions for workplace wellness program dividends, payment of interest on loans for attending Oregon public higher education institutions, and further increasing the cigarette tax were only briefly



Go to [Energy, Climate and Transportation](#) for Theresa's *Sine Die* articles.

## Support the Action Committee!



Please show your appreciation of the Action Committee and the Legislative Administrator by making a donation to [LWVOR](#)

It is your support that makes it possible to carry out this advocacy work at the Legislature



Volunteer to work on issues for the 2014 Legislative Session  
It's exciting!

Contact the [LWVOR Action Team](#)

### Smart Septic Information

The [Oregon Septic Smart Program](#) is designed to better connect septic system owners with onsite professionals that perform septic system inspections. Oregon Septic Smart is also a great resource for important information about proper septic

considered and left in the Revenue committees.

At the end, the budget was balanced, Oregon is in the black, and the state agencies are putting their funding requests for 2015-17 together. Planning for that biennium's legislative session has already begun with the announcement of deadlines for pre-session filing of legislative bill drafts in September and December. Interim committees will gather in May, and the cycle that defines Oregon's democracy will restart.

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## Social Policy

### Brief Session Thoughts

This short session was hectic due to the number of bills filed. Surprisingly, many of them were passed within this abbreviated time schedule. Our legislators were hustling. Some of the bills were the result of workgroups, so decisions had been made already. Many issues that could not be resolved were assigned to new workgroups or task forces, so they will reappear in 2015.



*Karen Nibler, Social Policy Coordinator*

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### Education

The Early Learning funding was approved in 2013 so the Early Learning Council (ELC) staff appeared before the House Human Services Committee on February 26 to provide an update on the progress of the hub devel



opments. The ELC received federal Race to the Top grants for administration and pilot programs. However, the Youth Development Council (YDC) funding for the second year was held as a special appropriation for the 2014 session. The proposed YDC budget was partially approved in Ways and Means with a \$1.6 million for Youth and Innovation Grants,

but the Juvenile Crime Prevention funding plans were held up by objections from counties and juvenile departments. [HB 4134](#) on the proposed plans died in committee. The YDC may continue funding to counties throughout the second year and make recommendations for funding priorities in the 2015 Session.

Grants for summer meal programs in schools passed in [HB](#)

system operation and maintenance for home [owners](#) and [buyers](#).

### Septic Survey

If you recently bought a home or know someone that recently bought a home, please visit Oregon Septic Smart to fill-out a quick four minute septic system inspection [questionnaire](#).

Have other questions about septic systems? Find updated Fact sheets and Guidance documents on the Onsite homepage!

[Oregon Septic Smart](#)

### TAKE ACTION

Make your voice heard

**Let Congress know that you support the Voting Rights Act**

Tell members of Congress to pass the new Voting Rights Amendment Act to protect the right to vote for all Americans.

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LWVUS asks you to **Support EPA's Limits on Carbon Pollution**

Make your voice a part of the record by sending a message! [Click Here](#)

### OLIS

The Oregon Legislature Information System has been redesigned and has been recording hearings and providing information on bills and information submitted to

[4090](#), as well as grants for summer schools to Title I schools with high poverty rates in [HB 4117](#). School fund formula changes were made for students in detention and correctional facilities in [HB 4008](#) and for medically fragile students in the Providence Health Care facility in Portland in [HB 4009](#). [HB 4087](#) sets up a Task Force on School Safety to consider plans for emergency situations.

Assistance to students gained attention in this short session. The inevitable workgroup was established in [SB 1525](#) on options for the optimal regional education delivery systems i.e. online distance education. The workgroup is to report by November 20, 2014, prior to the next session. [SB 1574](#) granted dual credits for courses taken by high school students so they could get both high school credits and a start on college credits. Ways and Means approved bonding for community college building projects.

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### Health Care

The Cover Oregon website failure commanded the attention of legislators and citizens during this short session. Several bills were crafted to deal with problems created by the inability of customers to complete the purchase of insurance through the site.

[HB 4122](#) requires the state to hire consultants for quality assurance and for oversight of Information Technology projects.

[HB 4154](#) extends the enrollment for health insurance through the Cover Oregon website through April, offered protection for whistleblowers, and gave the Governor authority to re-appoint Board Members.

[SB 1526](#) will request a federal waiver for subsidies for children's insurance under Cover Oregon. [SB 1562](#), which required coverage for diabetes during pregnancy, was expanded to require reports from Cover Oregon to the legislature. [SB 1582](#) was approved to extend the Oregon Medical Insurance Pool (OMIP) until March 31, 2014 for those who could not purchase health insurance due to prior conditions. The federal agency will allow the extension of current insurance plans, but this bill provided a bridge to continued insurance coverage.

House bills, [4108](#) initiated a pilot project to refurbish durable medical equipment, and [4109](#) supported financing a basic health study for those who do not qualify for Medicaid. Ways and Means had received a referral on [HB 4137](#) on the forgiveness of primary care student loans, but it was not considered. [HB 4110](#) on



the legislature.

The legislative staff is to be commended for the redesign and its transparency for this short session.

Thank You!

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Information System

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clients in custody in jail will require insurance companies to reimburse counties for costs; the bill passed along with the end of session budget bills.

The Ways and Means Human Services Subcommittee passed [SB 1542](#) to open the home care workers registry to non-medicaid customers and to allow home care workers to join the union. [SB 1553](#) provided guardianship options for Long Term Care residents. A Silver Alert system to locate and protect vulnerable adults was passed in [SB 1577](#). Coverage for telemedicine in [SB 1560](#) did not move forward, but there will be a workgroup meeting prior to the 2015 session. [SB 1569](#) on toxic chemicals in children's products was not moved, but the Co-Chairs of Human Services intend to bring it back in 2015.

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## Human Services

The Addictions and Mental Health Division of the Oregon Health Authority straddles both of the Health Care and the Human Services systems. Since the Coordinated Care Organizations were ordered to include mental health treatment, addictions and mental health treatment services are covered under public health insurance plans. Ways and Means Human Services reviews both of the Department of Human Services and the Health Authority budgets and programs.

The Oregon State Hospital (OSH) has been a concern for both policy and budget committees. The Oregon State Hospital was ordered to make improvements in 2006 by the



U.S. Department of Justice. The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) has met most of demands with the new Salem Hospital and the treatment malls within the hospital. Now the

attention is on community resources so that OSH patients can be returned to the community. The Advisory Board reported that 87 patients could be moved out of the hospital and 42 had been waiting for more than 90 days. It is very expensive to keep them at the hospital when they could be released to less costly placements.

The Addictions and Mental Health Division presented plans to distribute funds for community health programs, including supported housing. Many of the elements of the 2011 plan have not been realized yet, although the money has been distributed in grants. The Committee Chair wanted to see results not just planning meetings. The Ways and Means Committee attached a budget note to report on the number of housing units created. The League submitted

a [letter](#) in support of these services.

Teen suicides statistics were alarming to legislators. [HB 4124](#) on the transfer of the Youth Suicide Coordinator from prevention to treatment passed the house chamber and Ways and Means early. There was little cost involved. The Gambling treatment bill, [HB 4028](#), did pass this session and Lottery funds were assigned for this purpose.

[HB 4151](#) on the protection of vulnerable adults, the product of the Elder Abuse Workgroup, passed Human Services Ways and Means. The bill set a 120 day investigation requirement and established a registry for persons employed in facilities providing care for vulnerable persons. [HB 4114](#) will provide advocates for protected persons under the Long Term Care Ombudsman. The end of session budget bill reflected the increased funds for the expanded programs.

Shelter facilities for victims of sex trafficking was the topic of an informational hearing in the House Human Services and Housing Committee on February 26. Amanda Marshall, U.S. Department of Justice, reported on the conclusions of a workgroup initiated by this committee. She reported the difficulty of providing services to teens who were victims. These young girls are often homeless and will leave any agency placement. They are considered to be victims and are not placed in juvenile detention facilities. Both the Department of Human Services and Additions and Mental Health (AMH) staff recommended shelter programs as best practices for these victims. AMH is planning to release a request for interest (RFI) in establishing a 12 bed shelter program. AMH was awarded \$2.3 million to develop residential services and reported to the committee on the progress of these plans.



The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) Budget was amended to increase funds for adult residential alcohol and drug treatment, breast and cervical cancer care, dental pilots and home care workers. The Department of Human Services (DHS) budget indicated payments to Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU) for Pay for Prevention research, and the OHA budget included funds to collect data on cognitive impairment. DHS also received an increase in Aging and People with Disabilities community programs and transportation. As reported by the news media, the OHSU cancer center will be able to rely upon \$200 million in state bonds if OHSU can collect \$800 million in donations including the Nike \$500 million donation first.

The Oregon Housing and Community Services Budget for the second year of the biennium was reviewed early in the

short session, but decisions were not published until the final budget bills were released in the last few days. OHCS received \$10.75 million for operations and housing assistance, \$64 million in housing assistance and preservation of existing affordable housing, with an additional \$39.35 in Federal Funds. [HB 4038](#), on the sale of manufactured home parks, passed both houses. The Housing Alliance reported a successful outcome of the efforts in this short session. [SB 1541](#), which gives a tax credit to farmers who donated crops to charity, was passed by both chambers. The Food Bank remained in this department through the biennium. The Proposed Budget for 2015-17 will include recommended administrative changes.

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## Department of Corrections

The predominant issue was a funding shortage because the inmate population has not decreased as expected. The Ways and Means Committee increased the Department of Corrections (DOC) budget by \$51 million, which still leaves a \$10-15 million shortage. However, the population may decrease slowly with a savings for transitional leave and the incentives for counties to keep inmates in local facilities and programs. The Justice Reinvestment Grants have been distributed to county corrections programs so community programs and jail facilities are expanded.

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## Juvenile Justice

Juvenile Justice bills passing this session were [HB 4037](#), on transportation of juvenile offenders, and [HB 4094](#), on immunity for Minor in Possession charges. When juvenile offenders are sentenced to Oregon Youth Authority or Department of Corrections, they are normally transported by sheriff deputies from the court to the facility, but this bill allows the juvenile to be transported by Juvenile Department or Oregon Youth Authority staff. The League's position on juveniles was to maintain separation from the adult facilities, so this meets that goal. The League continues to participate in the Oregon Coalition on Safety and Savings, which supported this bill.

[HB 4094](#) grants a minor immunity from an MIP citation when the youth calls for emergency staff and/or brings an intoxicated youth to the emergency room for treatment. [HB 4073](#), which restricted sales of e-cigarettes to juveniles, failed to pass out of committee. The broader use of vapor





products will be considered in the 2015 session.

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## Judiciary Issues

[HB 4156](#) proposed that Department of Justice attorneys appear at all hearings in child welfare cases, but there were reservations by the Attorney General. Senate Rules passed the bill maintaining the current practice until next session when it can be more thoroughly reviewed. [SB 1536](#) named the parties who had access to juvenile court files in adoption cases. [SB 1550](#) stipulated rules and time limitations for a speedy trial. [HB 4066](#) allowed the Oregon Judicial Department (OJD) to set fees for e-court filings. Ways and Means awarded the OJD funds for salary increases, debt collections and increased services in the courts. The Crime Victims Law Center received funds from the Department of Justice allocations.

[HB 4143A](#) proposed that class action damages which were unclaimed be deposited in a Legal Aid account established by the State Treasurer. The current budget for Legal Aid is \$11.9 million, which only meets 15% of the need in the state. The Attorney General and Deputy Attorney General testified in support, but former Attorney General Frohnmeyer and other business attorneys objected. LWVOR submitted a [letter](#) in support. The vote in the House Chamber was 36 to 21, but the vote in the Senate Chamber was 15 - 15, so the bill failed. Legal Aid did not receive any further funding through the Ways and Means process. This issue may reappear in 2015.

[SB 1531](#), on local regulation of marijuana dispensaries, was sent back to Rules for amendments and was finally passed by the House Chamber 55 aye to 6 nay on March 5. The bill gave local authorities the right to regulate local facilities with a sunset in 2015, when it can be considered in the next full legislative session. Both [SB 1551](#), on registration of firearms and [SB 1556](#), on marijuana legalization, were held up in Senate Rules.

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## Full Ways and Means

The Full Ways and Means Committee prepared the final budget bills, which were not released to the public until one hour before the Capital Construction Committee at 5:00 pm on March 6, and the bills were not released to the minority party members of the Ways and Means Committee until that time. Those



members voted on these complex bills at 8:00 pm on March 6, and the Senate and House Chambers voted on the bills on March 7, hours before *Sine Die*.

The Legislative staff posted all bills and amendments at least an hour before hearings throughout this short session, so they were available to the public online or in the Capitol. However, the budget review and recommendations were considered throughout the 30+ days of the session, and it would be expected that all members of the Full Ways and Means Committee would be involved in the final budget process, rather than excluding minority members until 24 hours before the session closed.

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## Background Check Bill Fails to Move

[SB 1551](#), which would have expanded the current background check law to include private gun sales, never made it out of the Senate Rules Committee, despite the best efforts of Senate Judiciary Chair Floyd Prozanski and the Alliance to Prevent Gun Violence. A "gut and stuff" version was introduced late in the session in an attempt to appeal to critics of the original bill. It contained two new provisions:



*Marge Easley, Social Policy Volunteer.*

- a requirement to report failed background checks to local law enforcement, and
- greater controls on firearm access by the mentally ill.

Behind-the-scene negotiations continued until the final hours of the session, precipitating a last minute [action alert](#) to supporters. Unfortunately the clock ran out, leaving the issue for another day. We will be closely watching to see if background check legislation fares any better in our neighboring state of Washington.

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## Natural Resources

### Short Session Work

Your Natural Resource Action Team followed about 50 of the almost three hundred bills filed this session. We supported a few bills, but objected to others.

Most died in committee.

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*Peggy Lynch, Natural  
Resources  
Coordinator*

## HB 4078-A: A Court Settlement

For those who live in the Portland Metro area, you have been following the attempt to protect farmland and add urban land through designating urban and rural reserves for 50 years. The concept was meant to allow farmers to invest in their land for the long term and to allow Metro to expand their urban growth boundary in a more certain manner. But, particularly in Washington County, the system was contentious and ended up with 22 parties appealing some portion of the local decision. [HB 4078](#) was filed at the beginning of session to circumvent the appeals process and legislatively adopt the local decision. The League strenuously [opposed](#) this bill.

Everything changed when the Oregon Court of Appeals came down against much of the local decision. As is often true with other lawsuits, the appealing parties came together and negotiated a settlement of the lawsuit that provides certainty to the Metro urban areas and protection from development of really high quality farmland in Washington County. We did weigh in with legislators by objecting to a section of the proposed amendment setting timelines for future Court of Appeals rulings. That section did not appear in the final amendment. The League was neutral on the final bill which simply memorialized the settlement in state law. We are, however, concerned that next session we will see cities attempt to "fix" their urban growth boundary issues with legislation. The League supports our statewide land use planning system **with local implementation** and will continue to object to legislative action on local land use matters.



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## Regional Solutions: HB 4015B and HB 5201A

[HB 4015](#) was amended so that natural resource agencies are to do a plan by July 1 regarding how they will participate in the [Regional Solutions program](#). That means that agencies will be considering their staffing needs for the 2015 budget cycle and will, hopefully, include an "ask" for this new obligation. The bill also says that grants and loan programs should, after applying the laws and rules for which these programs were created, consider (not prioritize) [Regional Priorities](#) during their application process. And, important to the League, the Governor and the Department of Administrative Services,

*"shall develop a process to provide public notice and the opportunity for public comment, and for consideration of public comments, at regional solutions advisory committee meetings where the establishment of regional priorities for community and economic development and regional implementation project proposals are being considered."*

This bill was a priority of your Natural Resources Coordinator.

Separately, the \$10 million of lottery revenue bond proceeds budgeted in 2013 for a new Regional Infrastructure Fund housed in the Oregon Business Development Department was allocated for specific projects as part of [HB 5201A](#) in 2014. The approved projects are listed below:

- North Central Region - North Central Oregon Attainable Housing Revolving Loan Fund (\$2 million)
- South Central Region - Removing Stringent Air Quality Permitting Requirements (\$1.5 million)
- South Central Region - Innovation and Learning Center (\$500,000)
- Mid-Valley Region - White's Rail Siding (\$300,000)
- Mid-Valley Region - Carlton Water Infrastructure (\$500,000)
- Mid-Valley Region - Job Growers Workforce Investment Board (\$550,000)
- North Coast Region - Rainier Rail Corridor (\$2 million)
- South Coast Region - Portable Dredge Purchase (\$2 million).

At this point, we have no details about these projects. **Any information you might have would be appreciated.**

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## Other Budget Issues

\*All agencies had 2% of their approved



budgets "held back" in the 2013 budget process. Most natural resource agencies had 25% of the 2% returned to their budgets in 2014.



\*All agencies were to work with the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to find a 5% administrative savings between the 2013 and 2014 sessions. Since DAS did not return to the Legislature with specific savings, the Legislative Fiscal Office worked with agencies to reduce their budgets to reflect this expected savings.

\*\$40 million General Fund to Department of Forestry for additional 2013 fire season expenses. (We can only hope that the 2014 season is not as severe, but the Ways and Means Co-Chairs kept funding for the Emergency Board to spend if this or other emergencies occur.)

\*\$400,000 to the Port of Port Orford for redevelopment of the Cannery Building owned by the Port.

\*Approval of expenditure of a federal funds grant to purchase an additional 240 acres for the South Slough National Estuarine Reserve.

\*\$125,000 to the Department of Agriculture for the Genetically Modified Organisms Task Force.

\*\$375,000 to the Department of Environmental Quality for air toxics monitoring in the Swan Island area.

\*Added a Budget Note to require that some monies from [SB 839](#) (2013) bonds go to studies conducted by the United States Army Corps of Engineers to allocate stored water in the Willamette Basin Project Reservoirs (\$1.5 million) and to conduct a comprehensive basin study by the United States Bureau of Reclamation in the Deschutes River Basin (\$750,000). These dollars are to match expected federal monies to be granted this fall.

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## Update on Parks Exchange

After concern from local Grant County residents and elected leaders, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission chose not to purchase Grouse Mountain Ranch. They also postponed a final decision on the former "exchange" related



to the Bandon area park property until their April meeting.

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## On-going Rulemaking and Interim Issues

The Department of Environmental Quality is considering rules to update their air quality standards. Portland League member, Margaret Noel, attended a stakeholder meeting on this effort. Look for opportunities for public input in April.

The Water Resources Department is working with two Work Groups, Seasonally Varying Flows (including Science and Economic Subgroups) and Governance, before commencing official rulemaking to implement [SB 839](#) (2013) for water storage and conservation projects. \$10 million in bonds were authorized in 2013 under this bill. See [update](#) on implementation of [SB 839](#).

The League is participating in natural resource agency budget and policy development for the 2015 legislative session.

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## You Can Help Shape Oregon Law

With 14 natural resource agencies to follow, we need volunteers interested in learning more about wetlands, clean air, energy/climate, transportation, agricultural or forestry issues. **Training available.**

Call or email Peggy Lynch, Natural Resources Coordinator, [ZULUDAR@aol.com](mailto:ZULUDAR@aol.com) or 541-745-1025.

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## Energy/Climate/Transportation

### Progress: Energy, Climate and Transportation Bills

**Transportation bills passed:** [HJM 201](#), a resolution asking Congress to expedite improved standards for new and existing crude oil carrying rail tank cars, passed the House (55-2-3) and the Senate (30-0). See League [testimony](#).



*Theresa Gibney,  
Natural Resources  
Volunteer*

Other transportation-focused bills that passed encouraged alternative fuels use by providing state backed loans to private fleets ([HB 4107](#)) and replacing per-gallon fuel taxes with a special license fee ([HB 4131](#)).

**Public Infrastructure:** The passage of [HB 4111](#) will

launch a system of public/private financing for public infrastructure, including energy and transportation projects. As amended, [HB 4111](#) enables targeted pilots of public/private financing within the envelope of existing state contract law. [HB 5201](#) provides \$1,080,000 in funding to initiate the West Coast Infrastructure Exchange and the Public Infrastructure Commission called for in [HB 4111](#). At least \$100,000 is to be used to fund evaluation of projects that might deliver a great return on taxpayer investment through a public/private contract.

**Energy Efficiency investment:** [HB 5201](#) budgets an additional \$5 million in lottery funds for Clean Energy Works of Oregon, bringing the total to the original \$10 million committed during the 2013 session. The one-stop-shopping-whole-house-approach to reducing energy usage in homes seeks to broadly replace or augment one-measure-at-a-time contracts. And [HB 4041](#) extends energy efficiency financing options by allowing local governments to facilitate privately funded, tax-lien secured upgrades to commercial and industrial buildings.

**Renewable energy bills,** [HB 4126](#) and [HB 4042](#), sailed through both chambers, with only one no-vote between them. [HB 4126](#) codifies compromises intended to keep attacks on Oregon's Renewable Portfolio Standard off the ballot in Fall 2014 and [HB 4042](#) adds wave energy to the list of net metered renewable energy technologies. [SB 1520](#) allows a kind of financing for and investment in renewable energy projects that is similar to investing in a Food Co-op or other membership-financed businesses. As amended, this bill calls for rules ensuring that investors clearly understand the risks of this type of investment and that safeguards are in place.



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## Died in Committee

[SB 1578](#) (-4 amendments), a bill seeking to allow public bodies to meet their obligation to spend 1.5% of construction contract spending with technologies fueled by biomass, died in Rules after passing the Senate. The League was originally [opposed](#) to [SB 1578](#), which was introduced as a bill that exempted a broad range of projects from permitting requirements in counties with over 7% unemployment, but was neutral on the -4 amendments.

[SB 1502](#) also failed to pass out of Rules. A portion of this bill would have increased the number of vehicles that can

be enrolled in the per-mile road charge pilot to 10,000. Other parts of the bill would have made legislative redirections of Transportation Commission fund commitments and directed ODOT to take over some county road segments in Portland Metro counties. These concepts are likely to re-emerge during the 2015 session.

[SB 1570](#), the League supported bill that would have lifted the sunset on the Clean Fuels Standard, was briefly heard. However, Governor Kitzhaber has instructed the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to complete rulemaking for the program, despite the looming sunset. Stating, "we never give up" in response to a reporter's question, the Governor seems to be positioning the bill for a run during the 2015 Session.

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