Natural Resources

Whose Water?

The League testified in support of HB 2257, a bill that will allow water rights certificate holders to apply for a name/address change should they want to update their records. Currently, the Water Resources Department has no authority to do so. Examples of the issue were: A certificate in the name of Robert W. Straub, our late Governor, was shared. Another certificate shared was in the name of WM. French, dated 1914! Over the years with death, property divisions, and ownership changes, it is difficult for the Department to contact current owners. It is also difficult for these certificate holders to close estates, etc.

If you have a story to tell regarding this issue, please contact Peggy Lynch, ZULUDAR@aol.com. We believe that these waters of the state should be managed for both the certificate holder and the public.

Fees for Service

The Water Resources Department is funded in great part with General Funds, the same funds that pay for our schools, public safety and human services. In 2003 a set of fees was established to pay for about 30% of the cost of processing transactions for various water permits. In 2009 the League supported HB 3369 where the fees were raised to about 50% of the cost. However, that bill put a sunset on this 20% raise.

Today, HB 2259 would remove the sunset and keep fees at 50% cost recovery. The League provided testimony in support of maintaining this fee structure. These
transactions are critical to Oregon's economy. Assuring that these transactions are environmentally sound is critical to all Oregonians.

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**Clean Fuels**

LWVUS has a strong climate change position. League members recognize the connection between our daily lives and the world's climate. That's why LWVOR signed on as a supporter of the Clean Fuels Program which requires oil companies to reduce carbon pollution from their gasoline and diesel fuel by 10% over ten years.

Unlike imported gasoline and diesel, there are a lot of homegrown clean fuels options, so support of this policy is not only good for the climate but for Oregon businesses. In most cases, these options are cheaper than gas and diesel. That's good for all of us. Currently there is a "sunset" of 2015 on current law. Please let your legislator know you support Clean Fuels.

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**LUBA**

The Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) is an important but very small agency that adjudicates land use disputes. With only 3 judges and 2 support staff, the League spoke up on behalf of continued funding for this important agency. If state revenues were greater, we would ask for the return of a staff attorney for LUBA to help the public work through the process.

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**CRUST Agreement**

On February 13, the Columbia River Umatilla Solutions Taskforce (CRUST) signed a Declaration of Cooperation on Columbia River-Umatilla Basin water projects. The Declaration, signed also by Governor Kitzhaber, outlines specific strategies for storing water for expanded agricultural use, increased economic activity in Eastern Oregon, and improved in-stream conditions for fish. According to the
Join OCN Salem Watch

LWVOR's partner Oregon Conservation Network releases Priorities for a Healthy Oregon 2013 click here to learn what they are.

Legislative Information Made Easier
If you have had a difficult time in past Legislative sessions finding information about session bills, committees, hearings and what's going on today, OLIS, Oregon Legislative Information System can help. It offers an easy to use system. Click Here and give it a try.

Want to Help?
Oregon Conservation Network invites you to join us at one of our gatherings to discuss the legislative session this month. We will share priorities with you and hear about the issues that matter most to you when it comes to protecting our natural legacy.

Feb 25th - Eugene with Majority Leader Val Hoyle, 6-8 pm at Cosmic Pizza
Feb 27th - Bend, 7-9 pm at Broken Top Bottle Shop
Feb 28th - Portland, 6:30-8:30 pm at The Governor, “People with diverse interests have come together, found common ground, and developed a strategy that can benefit farms, salmon and new jobs in the region.”

Coming soon: Specific legislation to help implement the strategies contained in the declaration, including both policy and bonding bills. See Water Resources Commission report and an Oregonian article.

Renewed Interest in Renewables
by Theresa Gibney, Action Committee Volunteer

Of the more than 50 energy bills already dropped during the 2013 session, 28 deal with issues regarding renewable energy.

HB 2105, HB 2106, HB 5011, HB 2440, HB 2704, HB 2805, HB 2819 and HB 2820 modify requirements for the siting process for large scale renewable energy projects and transmission, and are likely to be heard in both the House Energy & Environment and Land Use Committees.

HB 2893 seeks to establish solar electricity sales at the value of the solar resource.

HB 2795, HB 2796, HB 2812, and SB 562 seek modification for programs that enable customers to trade renewable energy generated by the customer for energy provided at other times by the utility (called net metering programs).

These bills expand the net metering requirement to municipal utilities and rural electric cooperatives, add to the types of renewable energy that can be net metered, and allow renewable energy facilities to be jointly owned and operated by community groups that are not local utilities. HB 2812 also establishes a target of 500 MW of distributed generation to be installed by 2020.

More to come next week!

Energy Trust
by Theresa Gibney, Action Committee Volunteer

Several bills are directed at changing the way the 3% collected on Portland General Electric and Pacific Power bills is spent:
Concerned About Harmful Pesticides in Public Places?
Join Beyond Toxics at the Capitol March 8, 9:00-Noon.
For more information Click Here

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 2013 Legislative Session
It's exciting!
Contact the LWVOR Action Team

SB 427 seeks to move the majority of funding currently provided to the Energy Trust (for energy efficiency programs and incentives) to direct grants to K-12 Public Schools for energy conservation;

HB 2801 asks the Energy Trust to invest in whole building retrofits for maximum (instead of cost effective) energy efficiency;

HB 2803 seeks Legislative Task Force review of Energy Trust programs.

All three of these bills move from the historic program, best characterized as cost effective avoidance of energy generation and transmission expenditures through ratepayer investment.

Counting Carbon
by Theresa Gibney, Action Committee Volunteer

HB 2274 seeks to eliminate all counting of carbon emissions, except from electricity generation facilities in Oregon.

HB 2497 and HB 2874 are alternative proposals for a Carbon Tax and SB 537 proposes a Task Force to consider a Carbon Tax.

HB 2806 requires the Secretary of State to audit agencies for carbon reductions linked with the requirements of HB 2806.

The League is monitoring these bills as they relate to our position on Climate Change.

Governance

Economic Forecast: Hare or Tortoise?

According to the Oregon Office of Economic Analysis, there is good news and bad news included in the March economic and revenue forecast. There will be an ending balance of $162.3 million on June 30, 2013 for the current biennium, up from the December, 2012 projection. However, the new forecast indicates a decline of $74 million for 2013-15, leaving only $87.1 million as the carry-over to the next biennium, a 1% increase to the $16
The economy continues to slowly move forward with employment growth except in Eastern Oregon, increases in construction and the housing market, and the possibility of enough corporate income tax increase to trigger a kicker tax credit, but not as high as normal after a recession.

While there is a 2% job growth annually forecast for the private sector, as well as a 40-60% increase in housing growth, these are not at the usual growth levels. A very good revenue stream from personal income tax payers above the $200,000 level is projected in April, but considerably less is expected for the future due to taking advantage of current federal tax laws. About a 40% increase, $40 million, is expected. Looking ahead at what changes may occur nationally, cutbacks in programs such as Medicaid could seriously affect Oregon. Nationally, expansion has only weak momentum. Housing and wholesale market growth and increased consumer spending will be affected by the coming federal cutbacks and lower investments.

So things are brighter in the near term, but darker for the next biennium.

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### Tax Credits and More: The Games Begin

The Senate and House Revenue committees have listened carefully to the analysis of the 2013-15 Tax Expenditure Report, and realized that just considering revising or repealing sun setting tax credits as possible sources for revenue will not be enough. There are significant deductions and exemptions that also need review. These include such things as the senior medical deduction, the second home mortgage deduction, and the home owners county property tax deferral program. There will be bills that specifically relate to these subjects and others, which the League will discuss, looking particularly at revenue impact, social value, and revision alternatives.

The hearings have begun in the Policy committees regarding tax credits for such programs as the farmworkers housing (SB 323), the Oregon Cultural Trust fund (HB 2470), candidate campaign contributions (HB 2407 and HB 2471), rural medical services (SB 324), and the low income Earned Income Credit that is part of the Governor’s budget. The bills are written to extend the tax credits so
the committee must determine whether to support the extension or recommend repeal or revision. The action is sent to the Tax Credit committee for the decision. For the most part, in the few reviews so far, supporters have far outweighed reformers in pleading to retain what they feel are critical to the protection of necessary services.

The League will be determining which credits our positions will allow us to support or oppose.

**Election Priorities; Secretary of State**

In a presentation to the House Rules committee, Secretary of State Kate Brown listed her priorities for Oregon elections as voter registration modernization, ballot security and campaign finance. Removing barriers to voting and voter registration will be measures such as changing postage requirements, portable registration, and 16 year old registration. Ballot security and accounting for ballot procedures and policies (HB 2199) and policies for challenged ballots continue to be critical issues. In dealing with campaign finance, there are bills requiring two-day reporting of $1000 contributions during 14 days prior to an election (HB 2197 and HB 2419), which also includes disclosure on communication contributions. These bills are being discussed in the House Rules committee.

Two bills requiring tighter voter registration regulations regarding citizenship and residency (HB 2364 and HB 2463) have been filed by Representative Kim Thatcher.

More stringent initiative and referendum measures require chief petitioners to conduct employee background checks and protection for whistle blowers (SB 148) and petition committee formation (SB 145). National Popular Vote is on the agenda, as well as such items as military and overseas voting (SB 149), minor political party maintenance (SB 146), raising maximum civil penalties for election law violations (SB 150), Voters' Pamphlet online filings (SB 147) and campaign finance updates (SB 145). These bills will be heard in the Senate Rules committee.

**Redistricting: A new Process**

HB 2686 and its companion constitutional amendment, HJR 17, propose to change the way Oregon realigns its legislative and Congressional districts every 10 years. The resolution would create a new section for Article IV of the
Oregon Constitution and amend sections 3, 6 and 8 of Article IV which currently authorize the Legislature to reapportion the state's legislative and federal districts following the federal decennial census. A nine-member independent commission would be appointed from a pool of nominees specified by law and charged with developing the redistricting plan.

The commission is a public body and must hold at least 10 public meetings around the state to receive public plans and comments, both before and after a plan has been adopted. One hearing must be held in each of the five Congressional districts. The House and Senate must make recommendations to the commission by May 1, and a final plan must be adopted by July 1. If reviewed by the Oregon Supreme Court by elector petition, a decision to finalize or require a new plan must be made by September 1.

The House bill provides that the Secretary of State as State Auditor shall establish a nominating and application process for electors to serve as commission members and sets forth the individuals and bodies who may nominate. Commission members are not compensated, but receive reimbursement for expenses. It also provides for a census of all persons in the custody of the Department of Corrections using their last known address, with adjustment to the population count of the specific area.

The League's Redistricting study report and subsequent position (page 11) will allow us to support these measures.

National Popular Vote Waiting

The drafted legislative concept for Oregon to join the Interstate Compact agreement that would ensure that every vote counts in electing the U.S. President is still awaiting a bill number. The Oregon League will support the proposal already in the LWVUS position.

University Governance: On Board

Once a legislative concept some seven pages long, the proposal to allow the state's public universities to have institutional boards has now morphed into five bills, each more than 90 pages long. Two proposals, HB 2149 and
\textbf{Social Policy}

\section*{Prisons and Community Corrections}

The discussion of the 2012 Commission on Public Safety recommendations is front and center within the legislative schedule. The Ways and Means Public Safety Subcommittee started their budget review with the Criminal Justice Commission and the Department of Corrections, and a separate Committee on Public Safety will review the bills to implement the recommendations of the Commission.

The Governor's Budget proposed to hold the current prison capacity at 14,000 in the 14 prison facilities, and to invest in community corrections to hold the crime rate and

\textbf{Women and Families Need Help}

The Women's Health and Wellness Coalition will hold its biennial breakfast and priorities announcement for legislators at 7:30 a.m. on February 20, followed by a press conference. The League is a coalition member and will be monitoring a number of pertinent bills. Among these are:

- \textbf{HB 2779} which authorizes protection of persons subjected to sexual abuse,
- \textbf{HB 2672} which establishes workplace protections for domestic workers,
- \textbf{SB 5529}, the Department of Human Services budget which includes TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families), and
- \textbf{HB 2903} which ensures safe leave when women are recovering from assault.

\section*{Governance}

Karen Nibler, \textit{Social Policy Coordinator}

Karen Nibler, Social Policy Coordinator

\textbf{SB 270}, are identical. \textbf{SB 277, SB 278} and \textbf{SB 279} differ in specifics, with SB 277 the most. All five have July 1, 2014 as the operative starting date.

As the bills come up for discussion, more information regarding the contents will be available to League members and the League will determine the most appropriate action.
recidivism down. The Criminal Justice system has been using evidence-based programs in community supervision and in transition programs for inmates returning to the community. The recidivism rate for return to prison has decreased.

The PEW Center data reported an increase in the numbers of prisoners convicted of property and drug offenses, who had a low or moderate risk to reoffend. Measure 57 had increased the minimum prison times for these offenses. However, this has been different than the historical prison population for the most violent person to person or sex offenders. The recommendations include addictions and mental health treatment in the community and increased use of drug courts. The League submitted a letter with comments about the Department of Corrections Budget HB 5005.

The Oregon Youth Authority Budget HB 5050 (League testimony) will be heard this week followed by the Department of Justice. These budgets will be reviewed a second time with adjustments by the committee and with the considerations for the public safety commission recommendations. The Co-Chairs of the Joint Ways and Means Committee will be posting their initial budget recommendations for the state agencies within the next few weeks. Each subcommittee works within the proposed limits for its budget area.

Take Action

A League can host a Public Safety Forum to present the 2012 Commission recommendations and have local representatives or public safety officials answer questions or gather opinions at a local town hall.

Contact Karen at niblerk@comcast.net for more information.

The League's Stance on Gun-related Bills
by Marge Easley, Action Committee Volunteer

Gun violence prevention is not only a hot topic nationally. It also promises to be vigorously debated this session in the House and Senate Judiciary Committees. There have been at least nine gun-related bills filed, and the League will be carefully following their progress.
Senator Ginny Burdick has introduced **SB 346**, limiting gun magazines of over 10 rounds, and **SB 347**, making it a crime to possess a gun on school grounds.

The other bills seek to expand gun owners' rights, including **HB 3006**, introduced on February 14, which would invalidate all federal gun restrictions and prevent their enforcement in the state.

Using the long-standing national [League gun control](#) position, the League will be supporting those that prevent the proliferation of gun violence and opposing those that seek to weaken current gun control laws. Stay tuned for more details on these bills as the session progresses.

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