



Legislative Report

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In This Issue

[NATURAL RESOURCES - Whose Water?](#)

[Fees for Service](#)

[Clean Fuels](#)

[LUBA](#)

[CRUST Agreement](#)

[Renewed Interest in Renewables](#)

[Energy Trust](#)

[Counting Carbon](#)

[GOVERNANCE - Economic Forecast: Hare or Tortoise?](#)

[Tax Credits and More](#)

[Election Priorities](#)

[Redistricting](#)

[National Popular Vote Waiting](#)

[University Governance: On Board](#)

[Women and Families Need Help](#)

[SOCIAL POLICY - Prisons and Community Corrections](#)

[Take Action](#)

[Gun-related Bills](#)

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.



Peggy Lynch, Natural Resources Coordinator

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.

[Back to top](#)

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

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Representatives
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transactions are critical to Oregon's economy. Assuring that these transactions are environmentally sound is critical to all Oregonians.

[Back to Top](#)

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](#).

[Back to Top](#)

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.

[Back to Top](#)

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



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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](#).

[Back to Top](#)

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!

[Back to Top](#)

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.

[Back to Top](#)

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](#).

[Back to Natural Resources](#)
[Back to Top](#)

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



*Kappy Eaton,
Governance
Coordinator*

billion General Fund.

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.

[Back to top](#)

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.

[Back to Top](#)

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.

[Back to Top](#)

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.

[Back to Top](#)

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.

[Back to Top](#)

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

[SB 270](#), are identical. [SB 277](#), [SB 278](#) and [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.

[Back to Top](#)

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:

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



[Back to Governance](#)

[Back to Top](#)

Social Policy

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.



Karen Nibler, Social Policy Coordinator

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

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.



[Back to Top](#)

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.

[Back to Top](#)

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.

[Back to Social Policy](#)

[Back to Top](#)

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