



Legislative Report

March 20, 2013

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Social Policy

Early Learning Council Plans - Small Counties May Object



*Karen Nibler, Social
Policy Coordinator*

The Early Learning Council (ELC) has been meeting once a month in Salem during the Legislative Session. With the Race to the Top grant, they are proceeding with implementation and data keeping for the new agency. The Tiered Quality Improvement Model for child care is moving forward too. The League has been supportive of the new agency but has some concerns about the transition plans.

[House Bill 2013](#) facilitating the ELC plans was heard in House Human Services on Monday, March 11. The transition plan proceeds with a 6-month transfer of county programs to regional hubs from July 1 thru Dec. 31, 2013, with a starting date for hubs in January 2014. Several large counties are on track for this transfer and plan to apply as hubs, but many smaller counties have not coalesced into a regional hub yet. The administration's plan is to pilot 5 regional hubs, which would leave all other areas of the state without the administrative structure and funding for local programs. The League has prepared a [letter](#) for the next hearing.

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New Education Divisions

Two bills creating the Early Learning Division, [HB 3234](#), and Youth Development Division, [HB 3231](#), within the Department of Education were heard by the same committee on Friday, March 15. There was little opposition to these bills, except for the inclusion of the Youth Conservation Corps in the Youth Development Council (YDC). A former director of the Corps objected to the workforce training program's placement into the Juvenile

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Crime Prevention realm.

Iris Bell, the YDC director, said that YDC was more comprehensive than juvenile justice and offered social support, tutors, and internship programs. [HB 2392](#) relating to the YDC has not yet been rescheduled.

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Housing Bills Favored

[HB 2388](#) was amended to appropriate \$100,000 for a revolving loan fund managed by the Recovery Association Project of Oregon to aid in the development of housing for veterans, victims of domestic violence, homeless or those aged out of foster care. The bill was sent to Ways and Means.

[HB 2417](#) increases the Document Recording Fee (DRF) by \$5 to fund housing for veterans only. The DRF is collected by county clerks when real estate documents are recorded. This fee was approved in the 2011 session to fund low-income housing. HB 2417 passed the House Human Services and Housing Committee on March 15 and was sent to the floor for a vote and to the Ways and Means Committee.



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Oregon Housing and Community Services

This agency began in 1970 to manage anti-poverty programs and block grants. In 1985 it was a network of Community Action Agencies and the food bank. In 1987 it added homeless assistance and in 1991 managed combined funding with local agencies. The agency operates on \$8 million in General Fund plus federal-program funds and passes funds to 18 regional Community Action Agencies.



The agency is going through a reorganization in the next biennium. The federal recovery act funds will be spent by 2015 and the Homeownership and Housing Development Programs compete with private funds. The agency will report back to the Legislature in September and December 2013. Further decisions will be made in February 2014. The Oregon Housing and Community Service Budget, [HB 5015](#), will be heard in Ways and Means Transportation and Economic Development on March 19. The League submitted a [letter](#) in support of housing, utility and food programs.

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Salem

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Representative Jessica
Vega Pederson,
Senator Alan Bates, and
Craig Prinz, Executive
Director, Oregon
Criminal Justice
Commission

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1pm or 3pm
Workshop, lunch and
speakers
10am - 1pm

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Day of Action
to

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Temporary Assistance to Needy Families

The Department of Human Services (DHS) Budget, [SB 5529](#), has been reviewed in Ways and Means Human Services Subcommittee in sections. On March 13 the Self Sufficiency programs were presented. This section includes Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Jobs, and Employment Related Day Care (ERDC). The biggest expense is the food program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) which serves over 1 million people, including 381,500 children. TANF serves 56,435 families, and child care payments go to 14,400.



The SNAP program has had an 82% increase and the TANF program has had a 78% increase, due to the poor job market in the last biennium. The Jobs program was cut in the 2011 budget and partially restored in 2012. A part time job can disqualify a family but not provide sufficient income for independence. The ERDC payments are to ease the transition from cash assistance to employment.

The Governor's budget proposed a 3-year limit on TANF payments over a lifetime. Two bills will be heard in House Human Services and Housing next week. [HB 2055](#) will extend the sunset on changes to the TANF programs. [HB 3440](#) requires short term aid for families with a temporary loss of earnings. Public testimony on the entire DHS budget will be on March 21.

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Earned Income Tax Credits

[HB 2477](#) extends the sunset on the Earned Income Tax Credits for low income families. It is estimated that 1 out of 6 families qualify. The credit is claimed by 4,000 households with 12,000 people, 50% are children. The Oregon credit is at 6% now, but the federal level is 8%. HB 2477 was passed by the House Human Services and Housing Committee on March 15 and will be referred to the Tax Credits Committee.

[HB 2850](#) increases the credit to the federal level of 8%. HB 2850 will go to the Revenue Committee.

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Prevent Gun Violence

April 4

9:00am - 4:00pm
at the Capitol in Salem

This is your chance to show your support for reasonable gun safety legislation in Oregon.

Come for the day or come for an hour. The day includes visits to your legislators, workshops, and information on preventing gun violence.

To register or for more information the alliance's legislative agenda

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Quick View

of

Gun Safety Bills

waiting for a hearing at the Oregon Legislature

These bills are supported by
Ceasefire Oregon
and

The League of Women Voters of Oregon
see

[League letter to Legislative Leadership](#)

**Ladies at the
Legislature
Brown Bag Lunch**

Natural Resources

Land Department's Budget

The League provided [testimony](#) on the Department of Land Conservation and Development's [budget](#). The Governor has requested additional money for this department, the first time in a number of years. However, he has decreased the money for local government grants as a partial tradeoff.



Peggy Lynch, Natural Resources Coordinator

The League usually supports those grants, but we are willing to allow one biennium of reduction if [HB 2253](#) and [HB 2254](#) pass the legislature and change the way Urban Growth Boundary expansions are considered. The League is awaiting major amendments before determining our position on these policy bills.

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Streamlining and Regional Solutions

by Peggy Lynch, Natural Resources Coordinator

The League has been following a number of bills related to the Governor's [Regional Solutions Teams](#) and changes in emphasis from the state to these regions. [SCR 4](#) passed out of the Senate Business and Transportation Committee last week. [SB 251](#) ([testimony](#)) and [HB 2620](#) ([testimony](#)) have both had a public hearing. The League has provided testimony on both these bills. Amendments are expected as a result of our concerns.

The League believes working together in our various regions has value, but that citizens in those regions should be aware of these Teams and any identified priorities should have broad public



conversations. We also believe that permitting processes should be followed according to law and rule in order to protect Oregon's environmental interests. Oregon's clean air and clean water attract young talented workers and businesses to Oregon.

Included in the Oregon Business Development Department's budget is \$20 million in lottery funds for these Regional Advisory Committees to spend on regional [priorities](#) with another \$30 million lottery funds for "[high impact projects](#)".

Series

Featured speaker for the March session is Senator Jackie Winters

Workshops are from
11am -1pm
March 22
April 26
May 31
June 21

Contact
[Rep Julie Parrish](#)
for more information
or call
(503) 986-1437

Update on [Southern Oregon Regional Pilot Project](#)

Established by [Executive Order 12-07](#) signed by Governor Kitzhaber in 2012

The [website](#) for this project is constantly evolving, so check frequently.
Below are the links to each county involved.
[Douglas County](#)
[Jackson County](#)
[Josephine County](#)

Meet Action Volunteer Theresa Gibney



"You (Action Team) all

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Goal 1 Rulemaking?

By Peggy Lynch, Natural Resources Coordinator

[HB 3362](#) popped up last week requiring quick oral testimony in opposition, although we supported a surprise Section 4 requiring rulemaking on Goal 1, an issue the League has supported for years. But the main thrust of the bill was to require the same standard for participation before appealing to the Land Use Board of Appeals for legislative land use actions by local governments as quasi-judicial applications. These more broad actions do not require individual notice to all property owners. It was pointed out at the hearing that often materials are submitted at the last minute that change the legislative action in such a manner that individuals would not have time to "raise it or waive it" unlike the quasi-judicial actions where all materials are available to all parties before a final decision is made.

If this bill moves, the League will alert you.

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Moving on Down the Road

By Theresa Gibney, Natural Resources Volunteer



Alternative mode transportation bills being heard this week may interest League members. The House Committee on Transportation and Economic Development will hear [HB 2918](#), a bill enabling the Oregon Department of Transportation to enter into agreements with the state of Washington and with British Columbia on the Cascade Rail Corridor. They will also hear [HB 2338](#), a bill launching a Task force to investigate a West Side Express Commuter Line to Salem.

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No Change for Climate Change

By Theresa Gibney, Natural Resources Volunteer

[HB 2792](#), a bill that would require a carbon tax to be applied to fuel and electricity sold in Oregon, was heard on March 14th. The bill was introduced by Representative Jules Bailey, Chair of the Energy and Environment Committee. It was positioned as the start of a conversation about whether legislators want to replace existing regulation aimed at reducing carbon emissions (such as the Renewable Portfolio

*sure make it fun to be a volunteer!
You are organized;
you approve and edit and recommend quickly and efficiently;
you share appreciation often and sincerely; you have understandable and reasonable processes.
And you provide GREAT mentors to those of us who are shadowing/learning.
Wow!"*

Theresa is working with Natural Resources Coordinator, Peggy Lynch, tracking, testifying and writing about Energy related bills.
Welcome to the Team Theresa!

Support the Action Committee!

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Standard and the Clean Fuels Program) with a market mechanism driven by a carbon tax. Several Representatives called the bill an interesting idea worthy of conversation.

As a bill that increases revenue, thus requiring a 3/5 majority, it is unlikely to pass this session. An informational hearing on impacts of a Carbon Tax will be heard by the Senate and House Revenue Committees on March 20th.

The introduction of [HB 2792](#) was preceded by a summary of a recent Portland State University study exploring the carbon tax value required to reduce emissions and ways to make the carbon tax "revenue or job neutral" by providing tax credits or grants to consumers or industry. Proponents of reducing Oregon's carbon impact stated a preference for a cap and trade mechanism; opponents asserted that the carbon tax is a violation of free market principles. Representative Gail Whitsitt (R-Klamath) expressed concerns about the impact of a carbon tax on the poor.

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Step by Step

By Theresa Gibney, Natural Resources Volunteer

Two other bills propose ways to reduce carbon emissions:

- [SB 242](#) provides additional requirements for utility analysis of investments in coal fired power plants;
- [SB 488](#) seeks to extend the pilot program that encourages transportation with lower carbon emissions.

The League has submitted [testimony](#) in support of [SB 488](#), supporting this effort as one of many baby steps Oregon has in play to reduce carbon emissions. This is a priority bill of our partners in the Oregon Conservation Network. To learn more about the Clean Fuels Program that this bill supports, [click here](#).



Please call your [Senator](#) this week and ask them to support this bill.

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The Longest March

By Theresa Gibney, Natural Resources Volunteer

[SB 692](#), the bill to improve the energy efficiency of appliances sold in Oregon (including televisions, battery chargers, outdoor lighting and plumbing fixtures), had a successful hearing in the Senate Environment and Natural

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Resources Committee this last week, with only technical amendments expected to be needed to gain a bi-partisan "do pass" recommendation from the Committee. The League submitted [testimony](#) in support of [SB 692](#). Oregon has a long history of collaborating with our West Coast partners to create a strong market for energy efficient products.



Please call your [Senator](#) to voice your support of this bill in advance of a vote in the Senate that could come up before the end of March.

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O&C Trust, Conservation and Jobs Plan

By Robin Wisdom, Natural Resources Volunteer

At the Senate Committee on Rural Communities and Economic Development hearing on March 5th, the Governor's Forest policy advisor, Tom Tuchmann, provided an overview of [SJM 6](#). This proposed legislation urges the federal government to allow Oregon to manage the 2.6 million acres of Oregon and California Railroad (O&C) grant lands located in 18 counties in Western Oregon.

County payments in lieu of timber harvest have declined. Congress has reduced these payments and threatens to end the program completely in 2013.

Tuchmann explained the overall plan, which is to form an Oregon trust operating under Oregon laws to manage nearly 60 percent of the O&C lands in Oregon for sustained-yield timber production to benefit the Oregon counties in which O&C lands are located and all Oregonians. According to U. S. Representatives DeFazio, Schrader and Walden, the O&C Trust, Conservation and Jobs Plan would result in the restoration of sufficient county revenues to avert the financial crisis currently confronting many Oregon counties. They have proposed splitting the O&C lands into two trusts, one managed for conservation and the other for timber. Timber revenue from the O&C lands can be substantially increased, generating jobs and vital revenue for counties, while protecting the environment. The Plan would ensure a sufficiently stable timber supply to justify investments in new plants and equipment, would provide raw material to support manufacturing and other jobs, and would create up to 12,000 new jobs.

The plan would also:



- ensure that timber and other resources are conserved for the benefit of current and future generations by requiring sustained-yield forestry, permanently protecting all remaining old-growth timber on more than one million acres of O&C lands,
- adding more than 90,000 acres to wilderness protection, and
- giving an additional 150 miles of streams wild and protected status.

Some Oregon-based environmental groups say they were not invited to sit at the table. Tuchmann said both national and local environmental groups were invited, but some locals declined to participate.

Amendments have been introduced, which range from removing the O&C trust portion proposed by DeFazio and Wyden, and dedicating all lands to timber production, eliminating all acres dedicated to wilderness, about 25% of the O&C lands in Josephine County. The Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and the Siuslaw Indians would allocate the lands to the tribe's authority but also enact the O&C Trust. There were complaints about preventing mining in these areas as well. To learn more about the proposal, read the [Governor's report](#).

The House O&C Counties Task Force are meeting on March 20 to begin to discuss issues surrounding this important issue.

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Governance

Sixteen Year Olds Rule

[HB 2988](#), which allows 16 year old citizens to register to vote, was moved to the House floor with a "do pass" recommendation after a lengthy hearing on March 13. The 7-2 committee vote was bi-partisan. Six very articulate teenagers made their case, along with members of the Bus Project, the Secretary of State's office, a county clerk, the [League](#), and three opponents.



*Kappy Eaton,
Governance
Coordinator*

Two other voter registration bills were heard, but not moved forward. [HB 2017](#), which would allow already registered voters without a valid DMV license or ID to update their information using their four digit Social

Security number, received support, but an amendment to take out the emergency clause will be drafted. The League [supports](#) this bill.

We also [support HB 3175](#) requiring public universities and community colleges to work with students in increasing voter registration access and information. The committee appeared less interested in mandating additional action by higher education institutions, although student representatives made a good case.

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Oregon's Presidential Impact Chance: National Popular Vote

The House Rules committee will hear arguments on the National Popular Vote (NPV) Interstate Compact on March 20. [HB 3077](#) mirrors the compact already signed by eight states and the District of Columbia, accounting for 132 Electoral College electors, 49 percent of the 270 needed to elect the U.S. President. This year NPV bills also have been introduced in five other states, including Minnesota and Connecticut. LWVOR is giving priority to this legislation to ensure that every vote, in every state, will matter in every presidential election. Thirty-two Oregon House members and 13 Senate members signed on to the bill.

[ACTION ALERT](#): Now is the time to contact your [legislators](#), both [House](#) and [Senate](#), urging them to take this opportunity for Oregon to have a say in presidential elections. Click on [National Popular Vote](#) for more information. See League [testimony](#).



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University Governance Primary Focus: Institutional Boards

Moving ahead with the discussion of establishing individual boards of directors for UO, PSU and OSU, the House Higher Education and Workforce committee held a hearing on [HB 2149](#) on March 15. Among the witnesses were members of student body organizations, from both individual institutions and statewide, faculty members, and unionized staff. The students are concerned about the boards being given the authority to set the percentage of tuition increases (up to 5% annually) and the lack of a specific place for students



on the boards. Faculty and staff also want more specifics about their board membership and roles. The omnibus proposal shares most issues with [SB 270](#), which has been heard in the Senate Education committee.

Amendments to both bills, and their possible inclusion in the total restructure education bill being drafted ([see LR #6](#)), are awaiting the committee's attention. It appears that allowing the major universities to have boards and the availability of the other for state system universities to apply for them will be enacted in some form.

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Women's Health and Safety Issues Moving

[HB 2779](#), in House Judiciary, authorizes issuance of a restraining order to protect a person who has been sexually abused. During the work session, an amendment to insert "reasonable fear" as a trigger will be added. The bill is expected to move out of committee.



[HB 2672](#) which establishes workplace protection for domestic employees, will be heard on March 25 in House Business and Labor. It requires the adoption of rules related to employment.

Other issues under discussion include insurance coverage for follow-up notification and testing in cases of dense breast tissue, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) support, and [support](#) by the League for the extension of the Earned Income Tax Credit ([SB 326](#)) that passed the Senate and is being considered in the House Human Services committee.

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Revenue Prognosis: Tax Expenditures and Tobacco

In conversations with legislative leaders by the Oregon Revenue Coalition, the decision-makers strongly recommended that the Coalition develop a list of tax expenditures that could yield significant savings leading to additional funds for essential state services. The Coalition is working on the request -the Revenue Recovery Project - and the suggested list of tax expenditures and dollars to be captured will be presented this week. Lowering the amount for personal federal tax deductions, senior medical

deductions, and the total state itemized deductions are among the areas being explored by the Revenue committees.

The House Revenue Committee discussed [HB 2870](#) on March 15, a bill to repeal the law which prohibits cities and counties from placing a tax on tobacco products. Seen as a way for many local governments in fiscal crisis to raise dollars, the bill was strongly supported by county commissioners and city councils. Questions arose about administration of any tobacco tax and the lack of a cap on the percentage or dollar amount to be collected. The state also is looking at possible revenue by increasing the current \$1.18 per pack to \$2.18. Proponents point to needed General Fund revenue, lowering tobacco use, and health issues, while opponents voiced concern over the impact on lower income Oregonians and a probable black market expansion. Across-the-border issues, primarily with Washington, are mitigated by a higher tax rate there.



Of importance now is [HB 2325](#), which would put the corporate kicker into the General Fund for the State School Fund at the end of this biennium. The scenario changes because the state Economist is now predicting that there is evidence that the corporate income tax for the biennium will exceed the 2% threshold for return to corporate taxpayers. The voters passed an amendment to the Oregon Constitution to repeal the refund last year, but it doesn't go into effect until next year. The bill was heard in the House Revenue Committee March 13. Stay tuned for more.

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