



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF OREGON

Legislative Report

April 1, 2015

Volume 25, Number 7

2015 Legislative Session

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**Printer-Friendly
Version**

Governor Brown has published a new website, *Meet the Governor*.

Learn about her 25 plus years of service with important links for accessing records.

**ACTION ALERT
SB 680
National Popular
Vote (NPV)**

Your involvement is needed. Senate Leadership is holding up a vote on this bill. [Read how you can help.](#)

**ALERT
Ways and Means
Town Hall Meetings
will be held in April
around the state.**

Natural Resources

Budgets

Connect to One Another

The League provided testimony in support of [HB 5018](#), the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) budget. One of the most important natural resource agency budgets, DEQ administers the federal Clean Air and Clean Water Acts.



Peggy Lynch, Natural Resources Coordinator

This week the Oregon Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) budget, [SB 5511](#), will be heard with public testimony on April 2. There is a substantial increase in fish and hunting licenses/fees needed to balance this budget. (See [SB 247](#).) The League is supporting an increase in General Fund to support field staff for public purposes and the license/fee increases to provide services to the hunting and fishing population. At the same time, we are working with a broad group of stakeholders to find ways to fund this agency in the future. Support for [HB 3315](#) is but one of those answers.

Because other budgets often have programs related to natural resources, the League will be watching the Governor's Office budget, [HB 5021](#). The **Regional Solutions program** now takes up 20% of that budget! Plus we know of positions in other agency budgets that support this program. The Oregon State Police budget, [SB 5531](#), includes money for fish and wildlife enforcement—a nexus to the ODFW budget.

Public Involvement and Other Tidbits

Sadly, there was a less than public-friendly hearing in House Agriculture on March 26 related to the use

Look for dates and locations in your areas.

TOWN HALL MEETING

March 27

Roseburg - 9:00 AM - Roseburg City Hall
Winston - 12:00 Noon - Winston City Hall

[Contact your legislator for additional information](#)

UPDATE!



Room Change to ROOM 350 third floor of the Capitol.

Attendees will be addressed by the newly appointed

Secretary of State Jeanne Atkins

And . . .

Governor Brown will be stopping in.

There will be much, much more.

[Click Here to see the Agenda](#)

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of pesticides. The agenda did not make it clear that the Chair intended for agency representatives to present lengthy information to the Committee, leaving but little time for the full room of citizens from around the state to provide oral testimony. The hearing on those bills was continued on March 31 for those who were unable to speak on the 26. Testimony can also be submitted in writing to the Committee Administrator (email: Chuck.Gallagher@state.or.us).

On April 2, House Agriculture will hear a series of bills ([HB 3089](#), [HB 3090](#), [HB 3096](#) & [HB 3269](#)) ([click here to read the testimony relating to all four bills](#)) requiring the Dept. of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI) to spend precious dollars to conduct studies on behalf of the mining industry. **The League is providing testimony in opposition.** We are supporting the limited General Funds for DOGAMI to address natural hazards and to provide data needed for groundwater studies and water storage projects.

On March 23 there was a hearing on [SB 829](#) related to procedures that DEQ uses to process certain water permits. The League did not testify, but, after hearing the proponents of the bill, expressed concern to DEQ. We will be watching to see if there are amendments that make the bill reasonable OR if the League needs to provide testimony in opposition.

We are hopeful that [SB 266 w/-2](#) amendments will pass out of the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee on April 1. It will provide direction to the Water Resources Department to go forward with "place-based planning", yet another of the recommendations from the Integrated Water Resources Strategy, where communities can work together to develop long-term plans for clean abundant water for all. With our changing climate and increasing drought, planning for the future is critical.

[SB 477](#), the **Clean to Coal bill**, had its first public hearing this past week. In order to move forward, it must have a **work session scheduled by April 10**. As with many of these more controversial bills, there are work groups including multiple stakeholders trying to find a middle ground where a bipartisan bill can be passed. Much work is done by "lobbyists" at the Capital as we all sit together and bring opposing views to the table in order to find compromises. Your "lobbyists" are often a part of those discussions.

[View the Bills](#)

[Find & Contact your State Senator and Representative](#)

Bill Trackers

Track Oregon Legislature's bills, committees and activities using

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(Oregon Legislature's Information System

Also,

[Oregonian Bill Tracker](#)

[California looks to Oregon to adopt the Motor Voter Law.](#)

[Read the Statesman Journal article.](#)

[Read the U.S. Department of Justice information about the National VotersRegistration Act \(NVRA\) also known as the Motor Voter Act.](#)

[OTC denies funding for dock proposal.](#)

"The League was pleased to read that the Oregon Transportation Commission denied funding for the dock proposal that would have facilitated coal transport. Testimony was provided in July 2014 on this important climate change issue."

Peggy Lynch, LWVOR Natural Resources Coordinator

[Read the Portland Tribune article](#)

Watch List: Water: [SB 266w/-2s](#), [SB 829](#), HB 3169. **Rulemaking:** [HB 2497](#), [SB 100](#) & [101](#), HB [2975](#) & [3273](#). **Natural Hazards:** [HB 2633](#). ODFW Budget Issue: [HB 3315](#). **OSU Extension/statewides:** [SB 657](#); **Solid Waste:** [SB 412w/-3s](#). Land Use: [HB 3214](#), [HB 3282](#), [HB 3215](#), [HB 3431](#), [SB 716](#). **Fees:** [HB 2975](#). **Suction Dredge:** [SB 830](#). **Onsite Septics:** [SB 246w/amendments](#). **Regional Solutions:** [HB 3417](#).

For information about these bills, please read them at the Oregon Legislature website or contact Peggy Lynch: zuludar@aol.com

Climate Watch List: Coal to Clean: [HB 2729](#) or [SB 477](#). **Carbon Pricing:** [HB 2082](#), [HB 3176](#), [HB 3250](#). **Vessel/Rail Oil Transport:** [SB 262A](#), [SB 271](#), [HB 3225](#). For information about these bills, please read them at the Oregon Legislature website or contact Claudia Keith: ca.keith@comcast.net

Forestry and Toxics Watch List: [SB 257](#) & [SB 613](#), [HB 3428](#), [HB 3123](#), [HB 3434](#), [HB 3429](#), [HB 3430](#) & [HB 3482](#). **Elliott Forest:** [HB 3474](#) & [SB 806](#). **Toxic Free Kids Act:** [SB 478w/-8s](#). For information about these bills, please read them at the Oregon Legislature website or contact Jen Haynes: Jennifer.A.Haynes@comcast.net

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[Social Policy](#)

Budgets: Education, Human Services and Public Safety

This week's Social Policy LR report overviews legislation on budgets with links you may follow to see specific department budgets in this broad LWVOR Action portfolio. We follow the Human Services and Public Safety areas with some connections to Education when it pertains to poverty, health care and family safety-net issues.



Karen Nibler, Social Policy Coordinator

EDUCATION - State School Fund bill [HB 5017A](#) was watched by all due to the large portion of state funds spent on K-12 education. The State

Legislative Bill Work Session Deadlines:

April 10 - Deadline to post 1st chamber work sessions

04/21 - Deadline to hold 1st chamber work sessions

05/22 - Deadline to post 2nd chamber work sessions

06/05 Last day to hold work sessions for 2nd chamber.

League Links

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The Action Team and Governor Kate Brown at the signing for the Motor Voter Bill.

School Fund (SSF) serving roughly 567,000 students accounts for almost 40% of the combined General Fund and Lottery Funds resources per HB 5017 Legislative Fiscal Office Recommendation. While many school districts were unhappy with the recommended level of funding, they are appreciative of having this base budget target early in the legislative session in order to budget for the next school year. They hope for more funding later in the session. For the first time, the State School Fund bill includes full day kindergarten in all school districts. Read an overview titled [HB 5017 Pony](#).

Other budget bills in **education** include: [HB 5016](#) addressing administrative, Early Learning and other non K-12 education will continue to be heard in the weeks to come, see [HB 5016 ODE Presentations](#) for an overview. Also see [HB 5024 \(HECC presentation\)](#) and [HB 5025](#) Higher Education Coordinating Commission; and [HB 5022](#) funding the Oregon Education Investment Board.

HUMAN SERVICES - budget bills include: [HB 5026 \(click here to link to a list of presentations including several by the Department of Human Services\)](#); [SB 5526](#) for the Oregon Health Authority Addictions and Mental Health with an informative presentation at [SB 5526 OHA OSH Agency Presentation](#); [SB 5527](#) regarding the Oregon Health Authority; and [SB 5523](#) for the Oregon Medical Board.

PUBLIC SAFETY - These budget bills are assigned to the [Joint Committee on Ways and Means Sub Committee on Public Safety](#) where further information is available on [HB 5015](#), [SB 5504](#), [SB 5506](#), [SB 5514](#), [SB 5516](#), [SB 5529](#), [SB 5531](#), [SB 5533](#), [SB 5534](#), [SB 5542](#).

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY - a new joint subcommittee this year, also reviews IT within various department budgets. Recent reviews include: [Youth Authority IT Overview](#), [Corrections IT Overview](#), [DHS-OHA IT Overview](#). Upcoming reviews in the next few weeks include: Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB) State Longitudinal Data System, Oregon Department of Education (ODE) IT Overview, Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) IT Overview, Oregon State Police IT Overview, and Oregon Department of Justice IT Overview.

As you see, the Social Policy Action Portfolio is broad and busy. More assistance in following any one of these bills or a broader area is always welcome. Please email Karen Nibler, Social Policy



Left to Right: Norman Turrill, LWVOR Governance Specialist, Gov. Brown, Kappy Eaton, LWVOR Governance Coordinator and Rebecca Gladstone, LWVOR Voter Service

[Click here for video link](#)

[Governor Brown's Remarks as Prepared](#)

[Photos of Motor Voter Signing](#)

[LWVOR Battle Front! Read the Issues on Social Policy, Governance and Natural Resources as captured by our LWVOR Coordinators.](#)

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 2015 Legislative Session
It's exciting!
Contact the [LWVOR Action Team](#)

Coordinator, with your interest at niblerk@comcast.net

Reported by Chris Vogel, Social Policy Portfolio Assistant

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Gun Safety Bill

The much-anticipated bill for universal criminal background checks when firearms are bought and sold has finally been given a number and committee hearing date. [SB 941](#) was heard today, April 1, in Senate Judiciary, and [the League presented supportive testimony](#) along with other members of the Alliance for Gun Safety. A **work session has also been scheduled for April 2**. This year's version is not identical to the one put forward last year, as it requires both the buyer and seller of a firearm to appear before a gun dealer to request the criminal background check. The State Police will continue to perform the checks, although it is a change from the current Firearms Instant Check System (FICS), which is handled over the phone. The bill also includes exceptions when transferring a firearm to a long list of family members.



Marge Easley, Action Committee

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Governance

What is Sufficient/Adequate K-12 Funding?

The LWVOR position on funding the cost of public schools states "The major portion of the cost of public school should be borne by the state." Specifically, "The state should provide sufficient funds to give each child an equal, adequate education." The Joint Way and Means Committee passed a 2015-17 Budget for Oregon's K-12 public school districts of \$7.3 billion. It passed the house on March 31 and is expected to



Kappy Eaton, Governance Coordinator

State Bonding Capacity

For the 2015-17 biennium, the maximum recommended General Fund capacity is \$974 million and lottery bonding capacity is \$161 million. Both are less than the requests. Although our bond rating is AA+, factors that affect our rating include the kicker law, the volatility of our personal income tax and our active initiative process.

Capital Construction informational hearing was held March 20th.

Information on bond financing: [State Bond Financing in Oregon](#)

from the Department of Administrative Services (DAS)

[Overview of the 2015 Debt Policy Advisory Commission Report](#)

From LWVUS: UPDATE [Meeting Basic Human Needs Position](#)

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be voted on in the Senate this week. It reflects a 9 percent increase over the current biennium budget.

"If the May Revenue forecast increases the revenue projection for 2015-17, the education budget will receive 40 percent of the increase. Also, property taxes collected for schools statewide are folded into the school funding formula, adding to the funding total."

Across the state, some legislators and local school district administrators are protesting that the proposed total funding falls at least \$200 million short of funding the new full day Kindergarten programs, and that it will not bring classroom sizes down or prevent non-sustainability of current programs. Education organizations, their supporters, and Republican legislators are aligned against the Democratic majority. That leadership agrees that the increase over the current K-12 budget, which was a significant improvement over the 2011-13 funding, is not sufficient, but that it must be weighed against other important social and public needs.

The **Oregon Revenue Coalition** is focusing on various programs that might be trimmed to pick up additional school funds. In a letter to Lane County legislators, urging a "no" vote on the budget, and signed by all 16 of the county's school district administrators, it was stated that in a 10-year comparison of state funding that reflected an overall spending increase of 53 percent, public safety spending increased 69 percent, human services spending 84 percent, and public school spending only 35 percent.

League members, as individuals only, may wish to enter into the discussion.

Sustaining Reserve Funds

[HB 2961](#) was strongly supported by Representative Buckley at the hearing before the House Revenue Committee on March 24. **The proposal would allocate 1 percent of the biennial General Fund appropriations, and the Lottery Fund allocations, to the Rainy Day and Educational Stability Funds**, if the state's unemployment rate is between 6 and 7 percent at the time of the May forecast before final agreement on a biennial budget. With the strong probability that the Kicker law will be in play at the close of the 2013-15 biennia and cause more than \$350 million income tax dollars to be returned to individual tax payers in the form of tax credits, [HB 2961](#) would offer

The Guides provide pictures and information about each legislators, as well as information about Committee Staff.



Voter Registration Lookup available online through the SOS office.

Address changes can also be made at the SOS link above.

It's your right . . . It's your responsibility to vote.



LWVOR UPDATES HEALTH CARE PAYER STATEMENT
(click here)

reserve funds protection in the future. Committee members expressed both positive and negative comments during the hearing.

Ethics Training

SB 289 was up for a hearing in the Senate Rules committee on March 24, but a funny thing happened on the way. Initially the proposal would require periodic review of all state Boards and Commissions within the Executive Branch to enhance budget and government efficiency. However, there seems to be at least three amendments submitted, one of which would require training of members of such groups in ethics regulations within six months of member appointments. One Senate committee member expressed the opinion that the Ethics Commission already had the authority to do such training and there was no reason for the bill. There was no action, and it was unclear as to the future of the bill. Although there was agreement that it would be a good idea in some form.

Women's Health and Wellness

Several of the priorities of the Alliance are moving. Under Health issues, **HB 2005/SB 454** provides for statewide sick leave. They are closely related to the programs enacted in Portland and Eugene that ensure at last 5 days per year, and up to 40 hours, and would preempt the local laws. **HB 2539**, which directs the Department of Veterans Affairs to submit a report related to the delivery and usage of medical services by women veterans, is in Ways and Means. **HB 3023**, requiring that referrals to dental specialists, of medical assistance recipients who are pregnant, occur within 60 days, has had a work session. Under Safety, **SB 525**, had a hearing March 26 in House Judiciary. The bill prohibits possession of firearms or ammunition by a person subject to a restraining order issued by the court under the Family Abuse Prevention Act, or who has been convicted of crimes involving domestic violence. Under Economic Security, **HB 2007** was passed by the House, prohibiting retaliation for discussion of wages. HB 2006, which prohibits wage discrimination between sexes in the same job, is awaiting a hearing.

Campaign Finance Push

SJR 5, a constitutional amendment to allow the Legislature, or the people by initiative, to allow limits on campaign funding, is being supported

through a one page explanation sent out by **Common Cause**, with League support. The effort is being made to encourage a public hearing on the proposal. Polling shows that a significant number of Oregonians are in favor of such limitations to curb the increasing costs of campaigns and out-of-state influence.

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