

## **Oregon News**

### **POLITICS**

#### **Oregon Senate votes to repeal contentious wildfire map**

*Oregon Live | By Sami Edge*

Oregon senators voted unanimously Tuesday to repeal a highly controversial [wildfire hazard map](#). Republican lawmakers have repeatedly criticized the map, which they say has punished rural property owners with a flawed analysis of wildfire risk.

Republicans argue it is “riddled with inaccuracies” given that no one surveyed individual properties. Homeowners fear that insurance companies have used the map to change their premiums or deny coverage. Under state law, insurance companies [are prohibited from using](#) the map for that purpose, and the state’s Division of Financial Regulation [argues they never have](#). But rural property owners have insisted they felt punitive effects from what they say is a flawed map.

“We can’t go back and restore insurance. ... We can’t go back and reduce those rates for people. To a certain extent the cat is out of the bag,” **Senate Republican Leader Daniel Bonham of The Dalles** said Tuesday. “We do owe it to those constituents to continue this effort and this energy towards getting them back to whole.”

#### **Oregon Senate passes bill to eliminate wildfire risk map**

*Statesman Journal | By Zach Urness*

An Oregon bill that would [eliminate a controversial wildfire hazard map](#) moved one step closer to reality on April 22 after it passed the Oregon Senate. It now moves onto the House.

Republicans who made killing the map a priority this session celebrated the progress, and Democrats also voted to slay the map.

“I’m delighted to see Senate Bill 83 pass the Senate,” **Sen. Noah Robinson, R-Cave Junction**, said in a statement. “Many of my constituents and thousands of Oregonians have made it clear: they want the ability to protect their homes without being burdened by unfair regulations. Today’s vote is a crucial step toward undoing the damage caused by this flawed policy and returning control to landowners.”

“Senate Bill 83 repeals the most flawed and overreaching aspects of Senate Bill 762 from 2021, including the State Wildfire Hazard Map, while preserving the programs that genuinely protect property owners and reduce wildfire risks,” **Senate Republican Leader Daniel Bonham, R-The Dalles**, said in a statement.

#### **OR wildfires: Oregon Senate passes bill repealing Wildfire Hazard Map**

*KOIN | By Michaela Bourgeois*

The Oregon Senate unanimously passed a bill on Tuesday in an effort to repeal the state’s controversial Wildfire Hazard Map.

“Today, we celebrate a hard-fought victory for rural Oregon,” said **Senate Republican Leader Daniel Bonham (R-The Dalles)**. “Senate Bill 83 repeals the most flawed and overreaching aspects of Senate Bill 762 from 2021, including the State Wildfire Hazard Map, while preserving the programs that genuinely protect property owners and reduce wildfire risks.”

“I’m delighted to see Senate Bill 83 pass the Senate,” added **Sen. Noah Robinson (R-Cave Junction)**.

“Many of my constituents and thousands of Oregonians have made it clear: they want the ability to protect their homes without being burdened by unfair regulations. Today’s vote is a crucial step toward undoing the damage caused by this flawed policy and returning control to landowners.”

“This has been years in the making. With today’s overwhelming bipartisan support for Senate Bill 83, we are one step closer to undoing the harm caused by Senate Bill 762’s wildfire map,” said **Sen. David Brock Smith (R-Port Orford)**. “I want to thank the thousands of residents who raised their voices to make this possible, as well as my colleagues for their support. I look forward to seeing Senate Bill 83 move swiftly through the House and be signed by Governor Kotek, bringing much-needed relief to our communities.”

#### **Oregon Senate passes bill to repeal statewide wildfire hazard map**

*KDRV*

The Oregon Senate passed [Senate Bill 83](#) on Tuesday with bipartisan support to repeal the statewide wildfire hazard map.

"I'm delighted to see Senate Bill 83 pass the Senate," said **Sen. Noah Robinson, a Republican from Cave Junction**. "Today's vote is a crucial step toward undoing the damage caused by this flawed policy and returning control to landowners."

**Sen. David Brock Smith, a Republican from Port Orford**, said a repeal of the map would be "years in the making," and said he was eager to see the bill move through the House and be signed by Gov. Tina Kotek.

#### [Senate passes repeal of Oregon's wildfire map; next stop, the House](#)

*KATU*

The state Senate has passed a bill that would repeal Oregon's controversial wildfire hazard map. Residents have said the map has decreased property values and imposed unaffordable restrictions on private property owners.

**Senate Republican Leader Daniel Bonham** lauded the new bill's passage as "a hard-fought victory for rural Oregon."

#### [Bill would turn down temperatures in Oregon crematory incinerators](#)

*Oregon Live | By Jonathan Bach*

A bill that would adjust the temperature at which crematories must incinerate remains advanced unanimously through the Oregon House on Tuesday — and for a moment, partisanship went up in smoke.

House Bill 3729 would lower the temperature that human or animal incinerators must reach during cremation to 1,600 degrees Fahrenheit, down from 1,800 degrees.

HB 3729 passed with 55 votes in favor and none opposed. The other five lawmakers were excused.

#### [Oregon bill would restrict some therapists disciplinary info](#)

*Statesman Journal | By Anastasia Mason*

Disciplinary information on therapists and counselors licensed to practice in Oregon would be limited under a bill awaiting Senate consideration.

[House Bill 2016](#) would change the amount of time some disciplinary information on action taken by the Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists is publicly available online. The information for most disciplinary decisions would be available for three or five years and would not be removed from an online database or if the license was taken permanently.

Nosse said the purpose of the bill was to prevent permanent punishments for minor violations.

"I think this is especially important in a digital environment where frankly everything lives on and on and on with no ability to have anything fade away or go away," Nosse told representatives.

"The current practice ... makes embarrassing information from the past that was handled too easily accessible," he said.

The bill would require disciplinary information to be removed from the Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists' website three years after the person had satisfied the board's order if their license was not suspended or revoked, or after five years if the discipline was a suspension and the violation was "greater or similar." Information on someone who has lost their license permanently would not be removed.

#### [Lawmakers Ponder Raising Oregon Health Plan Payment for Primary Health Care Providers](#)

*Willamette Week | By Nigel Jaquiss*

[Senate Bill 609](#) would substantially increase reimbursement under the Oregon Health Plan (i.e., Medicaid) for primary care services provided by physicians, dentists, optometrists and mental health care professionals.

OHP reimbursement for primary care services is currently half or less of the reimbursement that commercial health insurers pay. About one-third of Oregonians are on the Oregon Health Plan, so it's a

major part of the market. Advocates testified that the low reimbursement rates discourage providers from offering primary care, leading to long wait times and worse outcomes for patients.

#### [Proponents File Ballot Initiatives to Move Hard Liquor Sales From State Stores to Grocers](#)

*Willamette Week | By Nigel Jaquiss*

Two men filed ballot initiatives today for [2026](#) and [2028](#) that would allow grocers to sell hard liquor. With small exceptions, the right to sell hard liquor at the retail level currently belongs exclusively to the Oregon Liquor and Cannabis Commission.

Grocers, who earn thin margins on the sale of perishable food items, have long sought to sell hard liquor alongside the beer and wine they already offer.

The Northwest Grocery Retail Association pushed a partial privatization measure this legislative session, [House Bill 3730](#), which would allow them to sell cocktails in a can, a fast-growing product that combines mixers with a hard liquor base.

In the newly filed initiatives, the chief petitioners took aim at one of the many public policy questions that surround privatization: What happens to the money the OLCC generates from liquor sales? (Liquor revenues are currently split between the state's general fund and local governments.)

#### [Audit proposes a fix to address Portland's quickly deteriorating infrastructure](#)

*OPB | By Alex Zielinski*

Years of neglect has left Portland roads, buildings, parks facilities, water systems, technology and other types of infrastructure deteriorating at an unsafe — and expensive — pace. The city owns nearly \$75 billion in these types of structures and equipment, and much of it was built over 50 years ago. According to [a city audit released Wednesday](#), most of the city's infrastructure is "near or beyond the end of its useful life." And it would cost the city more than \$1 billion per year to make needed repairs.

The audit, which is only the latest in [a yearslong string of city reports](#) raising alarm about its crumbling infrastructure, says continued neglect could lead to lawsuits against the city, environmental harm, and even larger repair costs in the future.

The cost has already ticked upward. According to city data, repairing aging infrastructure was estimated to cost the city [about \\$300 million](#) a decade ago. Left unaddressed, that bill rose to \$500 million by 2019. And the latest estimate from 2023 puts the cost at \$1.4 billion.

#### [Six Historically Displaced Students Applied to Transfer Back Into PPS](#)

*Willamette Week | By Joanna Hou*

A Portland Public Schools initiative to bring students living in outer East Portland back to schools in North and Northeast saw almost no applications this academic year.

PPS's Right to Return transfer program is modeled after a similar housing program administered by the city of Portland, which invites families to move back into areas where they once lived before high prices drove them out. (Most of the families are people of color, but the program does not select applicants based on race.) In 2023, after years of work with Black community leaders, PPS developed a plan of its own to work with David Douglas, Reynolds and Parkrose school districts to allow students to come back to 19 of its schools.

In its first year, the program struggled to gain traction, with 24 applicants of whom 23 students were accepted (one was denied for lack of space). In its second year, this academic year, the numbers were even lower. Just six students applied for Right to Return, and two were turned away for lack of space.

#### [Readers respond: Union bill opens floodgates to lawfare](#)

*Oregon Live | Commentary*

[House Bill 3789](#), dubbed the Workers' Fraud Protection Act, claims it protects public employees from bad actors falsely impersonating their union representatives. [According to the](#) proponents, Oregon doesn't have any existing laws to prevent such behavior, so the bill creates one — and allows the union to file a lawsuit against a person who breaks the law.

But with HB 3789, Oregon's largest special interest group has written themselves new rules that would open the floodgates for state sanctioned lawfare against their largest opponent.

#### [Oregon bill would require composting of food waste statewide and clear food labeling](#)

*OPB | Allison Frost*

Oregon lawmakers are considering [HB 3018](#), which would require thousands of Oregon businesses - from hospitals to restaurants to food producers - to [compost their food waste](#).

Nationwide, an estimated 15% of methane gas pollution is created by food and other organic waste decomposing in landfills. The bill would also try to reduce the amount of food being tossed out in the first place by requiring packaging to be more clear about when a product is safe to eat. The state's Department of Environmental Quality has estimated that 70% of the food thrown away could be safely eaten.

#### [In rural Oregon, U.S. Rep. Janelle Bynum talks health care, business and fighting back](#)

*Oregon Capital Chronicle | By Julia Shumway*

Her visits this weekend to the Marion County cities of Silverton and Mount Angel are part of what Bynum calls the best part of her job and how she tries to spend most of her time in the district, which crosses the Cascade mountains to include Bend, part of Portland and vast expanses of farmland and mountains in between.

#### [Oregon Rep. Dexter returns from El Salvador: 'We're disappearing people'](#)

*Oregon Capital Chronicle | By Alex Baumhardt*

U.S. Rep. Maxine Dexter wheeled her suitcase right off a plane at the Portland International Airport and into a news conference following a whirlwind 48-hour trip to El Salvador to demand the return of Kilmar Abrego Garcia, a Maryland man wrongfully deported to and imprisoned in El Salvador by the U.S. government.

Dexter, a Democrat who represents Oregon's 3rd Congressional District, met with reporters Tuesday afternoon outside the airport's lost and found.

"We're disappearing people," Dexter said. "I'm here to vouch for every American citizen's right, as well as anyone within our borders right, to due process."

She and three other congressional Democrats who went on the trip — Rep. Robert Garcia of California, Maxwell Frost of Florida and Yassamin Ansari of Arizona — were denied a meeting with Abrego Garcia by Salvadoran officials, and were not told where he's being detained, she said. He has been moved from the maximum-security Terrorism Confinement Center, or CECOT, about 45 minutes from El Salvador's capital, San Salvador, to an unknown prison, she said. He has had no contact with his lawyer or family since he was visited April 17 by Maryland Sen. Chris Van Hollen, also a Democrat.

#### **CRIME & PUBLIC SAFETY**

#### [Oregon crash that killed softball coach, player results in criminal charges](#)

*Oregon Live | By Tatum Todd*

The driver of the [car that slammed into a softball team's bus on Friday](#) — [killing two and injuring eight](#) — is now facing felony charges, including manslaughter, Oregon State Police said.

#### [Portland Police ramp up Measure 110 ticketing for public drug use](#)

*KATU | By Wright Gazaway*

There's been a dramatic uptick in the number of tickets Portland Police officers are handing out for public drug use.

A KATU investigation found officers in the county wrote an average of five times as many tickets per month this year, compared to the first two years [Measure 110](#) was in effect.

KATU Investigator Wright Gazaway found it was due to an explicit directive from police leaders.

Oregon voters approved Measure 110 in November 2020. It decriminalized personal possession of all hard drugs. Instead of arresting people, police can write a \$100 ticket. The ticket can be waived if the person calls a Lines For Life number and gets a health screening.

“There seems to be a lot of misinformation about the current state of the law in Oregon. So we frequently run into people who assure us that drugs are legal, open-air drug use is legal, you know, ‘I just came here from Arizona. I thought that this was fine.’ So there's still the, you know, ‘no, you can't do this.’ This is still a violation,” said Officer Baer.

Portland officers have seized over 150,000 fentanyl pills and arrested 45 people for selling drugs just this year in downtown Portland, according to the mayor’s office.

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler, who is also the city’s police commissioner, is encouraging state lawmakers to do more to cut down on public drug use.

#### **Wilson: 'Mission the same' despite higher homeless count**

*KOIN | By Ariel Salk*

When Keith Wilson took over as Portland’s mayor at the first of the year, his goal was to have available beds for all who are homeless late in 2025. On Tuesday, Wilson said they are still on track to provide beds and services that are badly needed [despite fresh information showing](#) there are more homeless on the streets than previously thought.

#### **City Council to consider making Portland Street Response its own branch, equal to police or fire**

*Oregon Live | By Lillian Mongeau Hughes*

The Portland City Council’s public safety committee passed a resolution 3-2 Tuesday that would make [Portland Street Response](#), which [responds to mental health crises](#), an independent, co-equal branch of the city’s emergency response system.

[The resolution](#) will now go to the full City Council for consideration.

While the resolution does not allocate funding, making the changes outlined in the proposal would cost at least \$2.5 million, according to Kanal.

At least three other cities, including Seattle, have independent branches of their emergency response systems that are dedicated to mental health care, according to the resolution. Representatives from two of them spoke on behalf of the resolution when it was introduced.

### **EDUCATION**

#### **Hundreds of jobs still on the chopping block in new Portland Public Schools proposed budget**

*KOIN | By Ariel Jacobazzi*

Portland Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Kimberlee Armstrong is finally releasing her proposed budget for next school year, which still includes hundreds of positions on the chopping block.

This comes as Oregon’s largest school district faces a \$40 million budget shortfall, with the potential for cuts becoming more real.

The district originally proposed 228 job cuts earlier this year. Back in March, PPS also went into a spending freeze until further notice, meaning the district put strict control on expenses related to travel, office supplies and contracts and consultants, among other things.

#### **Superintendent Armstrong presents ‘sobering fiscal cliff’ in budget proposal for Portland schools**

*OPB | By Natalie Pate*

Superintendent Kimberlee Armstrong is proposing a \$2 billion budget for the 2025-26 school year. She presented the package at a [meeting](#) of the Portland Public Schools governing board Tuesday night.

The budget proposal is based on the assumption that voters will approve the 2025 bond on the May ballot. The \$1.83 billion bond would renew the existing tax rate and be used for school building repairs and improvements. The bond money can’t be used to fill gaps in the district’s overall budget for classrooms and programs.

This is Armstrong’s first budget proposal since taking over as superintendent last summer. It represents a 15% decrease from the current year’s budget, with \$43 million in reductions.

Armstrong said this year’s budget cycle does not mark the beginning of financial difficulties for Oregon’s largest school district. Rather, it marks its continuation.

According to Armstrong's report to the board, inflation has led to higher costs of goods and services, as student needs continue to increase. The district has invested in its employees' compensation and teacher planning time, and the cost of public employee retirement plans, or PERS, has continued to rise at the same time.

Meanwhile, enrollment has declined. After hitting a recent high before the COVID-19 pandemic of more than 48,000 students, PPS has [steadily lost students](#). According to the budget presentation to the school board, since 2020, PPS' student enrollment has declined nearly 11%. Oregon as a whole is losing students, too, but at a slower rate of 6.5%.

The state's largest district is projected to keep shrinking. And since the district's funding is largely dependent on the number of students it enrolls, this downward trend affects how much money Portland can expect from the state.

#### **[With enrollment declining and costs going up, Portland Public Schools tightens its belt — again](#)**

*Oregon Live | By Julia Silverman*

Oregon's largest school district will operate next school year on [a budget](#) that is only about 1.7% more than the current year, requiring systemwide program and staffing cutbacks, Portland Schools Superintendent Kimberlee Armstrong announced Tuesday night.

Hanging onto every program and every position would require an extra \$40 million or so in its projected \$1.09 billion day-to-day operations budget that the district does not have, Armstrong said. That pinch is due to the one-two punch of enrollment that's declined 11% since 2019 and the rising cost of doing business, driven by inflation and the escalating costs of pay and benefits for employees, she said.

#### **NATURAL RESOURCES & WILDFIRE**

##### **[Matt Donegan Has a Plan to Stop Oregon From Burning. Think Moneyball for Forests.](#)**

*Oregon Journalism Project*

Matt Donegan is working on a plan for Oregon's forest problem.

In 2024, the state saw 1.9 million acres burn, an area more than twice the size of Rhode Island. And last year, the agency that leads firefighting efforts, the Oregon Department of Forestry, was beset by scandal, management turmoil, and near-bankruptcy from the cost of putting out blazes.

Donegan's theory goes like this: Fire is a natural and healthy phenomenon, and we need more of it to restore forest health. The problem is, the forests are so overstocked with dead, dry debris after a century of fire suppression that fires easily become catastrophic rather than restorative.

He says the status quo—simply reacting to fires—is unsustainable.

Instead, he wants to bring analytical rigor to forest practices on the 13 million acres the state has already identified as being at high risk for fire. Donegan proposes to break off a small fraction of that amount for intensive management—thinning and prescribed burns—as a pilot project.

#### **ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT**

##### **[Oregon House passes bill making large data centers pay for power grid costs](#)**

*KATU | By Vasili Varlamos*

The Oregon House of Representatives passed a bill dubbed the "POWER Act" on Tuesday. The bill aims to protect electric customers from shouldering part of the cost of powering large data centers.

The bill now moves to the Oregon Senate for further discussion.

House Bill 3546, which passed with bipartisan support, directs the Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC) to create a separate electricity rate class for large energy-use facilities.

According to the Citizens' Utility Board, a single 30-megawatt data center uses as much energy as the city of Ashland. Larger AI data centers can use as much energy as the city of Eugene in a single year.

Due to the high amount of energy these facilities consume, they require upgrades to their energy infrastructure and services, which can cost millions.



Under the bill, the PUC would assign infrastructure and service costs directly to those large users, rather than spreading those costs to all ratepayers. This aims to protect residential and small businesses from rate hikes caused by growth in energy demand from these large facilities.

The bill also requires long-term contracts with electric companies. Data centers would need to sign contracts of at least 10 years with energy companies. This includes minimum payment commitments, even if the facilities don't use all the power they requested.

The longer-term contracts are attempts to ensure utilities can safely invest in new infrastructure without risking losses that would otherwise be passed on to the public. Wochele said this is also to make sure data centers don't abruptly leave the state.

Several state Republican representatives voted against the bill. Rep. Bobby Levy called the bill an example of regulatory overreach.

## **National News**

### **TRUMP**

#### **'What I feel now is fear': how migrants are preparing for Trump's immigration enforcement**

*Oregon Live* / By Yesenia Amaro

Most in the group, which includes undocumented immigrants, say they're fearful. They'd like to be relieved of uncertainty.

The group gathered at the church last week not in search of spiritual enlightenment but, instead, to learn about their constitutional rights and what to do if confronted by immigration agents.

Nationally, the Trump administration has already forcibly removed alleged gang members – some of whom have no criminal records – to El Salvador in defiance of a court order. International college students, [including some in Oregon](#), have lost their visas while others have been sent to detention centers across the country. As of early this month, the Tacoma Northwest Detention Center was operating near capacity, which is close to 1,600 people in custody, according to advocates.

#### **Trump administration mulling \$5,000 'baby bonus' payments to encourage women to have more children**

*AP News* / By Matt Durr

President Donald Trump's administration is listening to several ideas designed to help improve declining birthrates, including offering a payment to mothers, according to [The New York Times](#). While none of the ideas have been publicly endorsed by Trump or his administration, White House aides have been presented a handful of options recently that advocates hope would encourage women to have more children.

#### **Oregon veterans and VA staff fear Trump cuts could harm veteran benefits, health care**

*OPB* / By Bryce Dole

The questions facing Sholin are looming over veterans, their families and the people who support them. Under Trump, the Department of Veterans Affairs is [primed to cut more than 80,000 jobs](#), a move that could spark [turmoil amid the mass firings](#) that have swept the nation since the president's term began. Few groups face uncertainty quite like Oregon's veterans.

More than 266,000 veterans live in Oregon, just over 6% of the state's population, according to [a 2024 report from the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs](#). A disproportionate number of them — 23% — work for the federal government, according to the Oregon Employment Department.

Veterans and their advocates are concerned that the cuts proposed by Trump could hinder veteran services in Oregon, increasing wait times for benefits claims and slashing programs that many depend on, like Social Security and Medicaid.