



Dates of Interest:

- Dec. 5th - LC's Returned
- Dec. 12-14 - Interim Days
- Dec. 21 - PreSession Filing Deadline
- Jan. 14 - 16 Org Days

FWAA Interim Legislative Update – September Interim Days

This week the Oregon Legislature convened for interim committee days. The committees are not allowed to introduce bills or take votes, but the hearings largely serve as a preview of major issues for the 2019 Session. In addition, this week was the deadline to request drafts of pre-session filed bills. These requests will begin to roll out over the coming months and all will have to be filed by Dec. 21st. Below are brief highlights from the hearings:

The Oregon Department of Agriculture presented to the **House Committee on Agriculture** on their Ag Water Quality Program. They continue to move forward taking care to help users move toward compliance and avoid levying fines. The Department noted they will potentially pursue efforts to add extra infrastructure, upgraded waste water treatment infrastructure, and fixing leaking septic systems. They noted they may also focus on removing pollutants to improve standards. View presentation:

<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/201711/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/150434>

The Committee also heard an update on the **Ag Heritage program**. This program was adopted by the 2017 Legislature with seed start-up monies. The goal of the program is to provide voluntary tools and incentives to keep land in farming and ranching for Oregon's economy and rural communities, as well as to support fish and wildlife habitats, find balance between conservation needs and what landowners want, and leverage available federal programs. OWEB is expected to consider administrative rules implementing the program in November. A letter from ag coalitions was also submitted into the record supporting OWEB's \$10 million funding request to implement the OR Ag Heritage Program. View staff report and presentation:

<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/201711/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/150550>

<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/201711/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/150427>

View coalition letter:

<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/201711/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/150353>

The **Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction** took additional informational testimony. Senator Girod invited Kevin Dayaratna, a Senior Statistician and Research Programmer for The Heritage Foundation. Mr. Dayaratna presented a heated and lively challenge to previous speakers and findings, specifically that any cap and trade program adopted by Oregon would have detrimental impacts on the Oregon economy and negligible impact on carbon reduction.

The Committee also heard from the **Western Climate Initiative** (WCI) and representatives from the government of Quebec. The WCI would likely be the entity Oregon joins in implementation of a Cap and Trade Program. Speakers noted that WCI provides a common set of rules that can help create an equal partnership among different size economies. The Québec officials emphasized the importance of linkage with other states and provinces to create a cap-and-trade market. Québec, which is larger in size and population than Oregon, “is not big enough to maintain a carbon market on our own,” said Jean-Yves Benoit, an official with the Carbon Market Division of the Québec ministry that oversees sustainable development, environment and climate change. View WCI presentation:

<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/201711/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/150537>

The **House Economic Development and Trade Committee** heard from Rep. Marsh on her Broadband Governance and Universal Service Fund proposal. The proposal would apply the current Oregon Universal Service Fund surcharge to cell phone providers. Currently only landlines pay the 8.5% surcharge. The proposal is to reduce the rate to 6%, apply to all cell phones, raising an estimated \$10 million/year for Broadband Fund investments. The second component of the proposal creates the Broadband Fund investments to assist communities in developing broadband networks. The USF funds are restricted to rural and remote areas of Oregon and does not go to urban areas. The funds would be distributed via grants and loans to support providers and technologies in unserved and underserved communities with technical assistance, planning capacity and infrastructure necessary for broadband. View legislative concept:

<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/201711/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/150311>

The Committee also held an informational hearing from the “**Natural Products Industry.**” Traditional agriculture took a bit of a hit as representatives from the organic farming association noted that organic farming is better for the environment and the workers on the farm. They noted one of their biggest obstacles is the aerial application of pesticides. Rep. Marsh inquired as to the concern around contamination of GMO’s, noting the lack of local control to regulate GMOs. The panel responded yes, contamination is a problem – particularly in the Willamette Valley – and also reiterated right now biggest threat is aerial application. View presentation:

<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/201711/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/150361>