

The Oregonian

City, county's climate goals laudable: Letter to the editor

By Letters to the Editor

July 9, 2017

I support that Portland and Multnomah County have committed to 100% renewable energy by 2050 ("Portland, Multnomah County set 100% renewable energy goal," June 1). Coal is a dirty fuel; it is destructive when it's mined and when it's burned. It's not easy for me to say this because I'm the son of a coal miner and my father's wages fed me and put a roof over my head. But I've also seen firsthand the health and environmental effects of coal. And because burning coal is a major contributor to climate change, it's imperative that we stop burning coal.

Given the advances in technology in renewable energies, the goals are probably not as "audacious" nor "impossible" as some might think. Rather, it's likely that both the city and county will easily exceed their goals and I applaud that they are committed to starting the process now.

Mark Hersh, Northeast Portland

Losing Portland's Mounted Police patrol unit: Letter to the editor

By Letters to the Editor

July 9, 2017

I cannot understand how Portland justifies building housing, feeding, allowing street camping, and funding the homeless in our fair city and can't fund Portland's Mounted Patrol unit that has proven to be useful with goodwill and deterring crime in the inner city? I would really like to know where the money is going that could not fund this valuable asset to our city? To take away a tradition of the uniformed horse patrol that has been active for several decades in this city, because the city cannot find funds or room to house a few horses does not make sense.

Linda Barnes, Northwest Portland

The Portland Tribune

Water treatment controversy heats up Tuesday

By Jim Redden

July 9, 2017

Public has first chance to testify on spending up to \$500 million on potentially deadly parasite not yet proven to be a problem

The fight over spending up to \$500 million to treat Portland's water for a potentially fatal parasite is expected to heat up Tuesday at the first public hearing since the Oregon Health Authority has announced the city must now comply with federal requirements.

The Portland Utility Board, an advisory committee to the City Council on utility issues, will hold the hearing from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. on July 11 in Room C of the Portland Building, 1120 S.W. Fifth Ave.

The hearing will be the first time since the OHA announcement that the public will be able to testify on the decision the council must make by Aug. 11 — whether to spend \$105 million to treat cryptosporidium by ultraviolet light or up to \$500 million on a treatment plants that would also control a wider range of other contaminants.

Friends of the Reservoirs, a neighborhood-based group formed to protect the city's historic water supply system, has already come out against any additional treatment project. It argues that no one has ever been proven to have been sickened by drinking water from the Bull Run watershed, the primary source of Portland's water.

"We implore you to fight to avoid an unnecessary Bull Run treatment plant as it will provide no measurable public health benefit, create new public health and ecosystem risks, and make Portland's water even more unaffordable," the group wrote Mayor Ted Wheeler on June 14.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has adopted a rule that says large municipal water providers like Portland must treat their water for crypto, as the parasite is commonly called. Portland was granted a variance by OHA because water from the watershed has historically been so clean. But the variance required the Portland Water Bureau to test for crypto — as the parasite is commonly called — which was repeatedly found in samples earlier this year.

Because of that, OHA is revoking the variance on Aug. 22. It is requiring the city to approve a treatment option and implementation schedule by Aug. 11. The council will hold its first hearing on the issue on Aug. 2.

During a June 27 council work session, Water Bureau Director Mike Stuhr recommended a filtration plant. Despite its higher cost, Stuhr said such a plant would increase the available supply of Bull Run water every year by filtering out sediments that are historically stirred up in late summer. It would also filter out any new contaminants the EPA rules against, as well as mud or ash deposited in the Bull Run Reservoir by landslides or wildfires in the watershed.

"If I was made of money, I would build a filtration plant and I wouldn't think twice about it. It does so many things," Stuhr said.

After the July 11 hearing, the PUB will schedule a follow up hearing to adopt a recommendation to the council on the crypto treatment option.

To read the letter to Wheeler from the Friends group, go to [here](#).

To read a previous Portland Tribune story on the issue, go to tinyurl.com/yamarw3n.

Judge upholds Portland tenant protections

*By Jim Redden
July 7, 2017*

Ruling issued same day the 2017 Oregon Legislature adjourns without repealing the statewide ban on local rent control measures

A Multnomah County Circuit Court judge has upheld Portland's requirements that landlords must pay relocation costs for tenants who are required to leave through no-cause evictions or who choose to move if their rent is increased more than 10 percent in one year.

Judge Henry Breithaupt ruling was released Friday, the same day the 2017 Oregon Legislature adjourned without repealing the statewide prohibition against local rent control measures.

The policy was introduced by Commissioner Chloe Eudaly shortly after she took office in January. She made the affordable housing crisis a top priority during her upstart 2016 campaign. It requires landlord to pay between \$2,900 and \$4,500 in relocation fees, depending on the size of the units.

"This moment is very important for the City of Portland. At a time when we can't get the support we need from our own state legislature, relocation assistance gives us a measure of hope that we can stand up and defend vulnerable tenants on a local level. With this victory, our next steps will be to focus our efforts on gathering data and refining this law so that it becomes an innovative model for securing tenant protections in Oregon and across the country," Eudaly said in a Friday statement.

Several landlords filed suit against the policy when it was unanimously adopted as an ordinance by the City Council in early February. Their attorney, John DiLorenzo, argued the requirements amount to a de facto form of rent control. He also claimed they illegally interfere with existing contracts and unlawfully allows tenants to sue landlords if they don't comply.

Breithaupt ruled against all of the claims, however.

"The Ordinance — while it applies throughout the city — will apply to any individual landlord only if conditions or contingencies are also satisfied as to that individual landlord," Breithaupt wrote.

The Portland requirement is scheduled to be reconsidered by the council when the current Housing State of Emergency it declared expires in September. Both could be renewed.

In response, DiLorenzo said, "We appreciate the time and effort which the court has put into this case but must respectfully disagree with the rationale expressed in the opinion. Whether we appeal will be dependent, in part, upon whether the City intends to renew the ordinance when it expires on its own accord. We will keep you apprised of our views on this point. On the other hand, we are grateful that the legislature was persuaded by the hundreds of property owners who made a compelling showing that rent control and general prohibition of no-cause tenancy termination rights would exacerbate the housing shortage rather than improve the situation."

OPB

Judge Upholds Portland's Renter Protection Law

By Amelia Templeton

July 7, 2017

A Multnomah County judge on Friday upheld a Portland ordinance requiring landlords to help pay relocation expenses for their tenants in some circumstances.

The city's law allows tenants to collect between \$2,900 and \$4,500 when landlords use no-cause evictions or raise rents more than 10 percent in a year.

Two landlords sued Portland after the council adopted the law this winter. Their attorney, John DiLorenzo, argued that the relocation aid payments violated a statewide ban on rent control and violated contract law.

But a Multnomah County judge found the state's ban on cities imposing rent control does not prevent cities from requiring renter aid payments.

Multnomah County and Portland are what's known as home rule jurisdictions. In effect, they share lawmaking power with the state.

Portland's ordinance is set to expire in October along with the City Council's housing emergency declaration.

Now that a judge has upheld the law, Commissioner Chloe Eudaly will push to have it be made permanent, according to her policy director Jaime Duhamel.

"This is in effect all we have, so yes, we intend to make it a permanent long term law as long as we need to protect people," Duhamel said.

A bill that would have rolled back the statewide ban on rent control and limited no fault evictions was introduced in the Legislature this session, but did not pass.

Duhamel said Eudaly's office is in touch with other cities in Oregon that were following the legal case and are interested in crafting their own relocation aid policies.

DiLorenzo was not immediately available for comment on the court ruling.

Portland Grant Aims To Help Community Groups Track Hate Crimes

By Ericka Cruz Guevarra

July 8, 2017

There are already just as many hate and bias crimes reported in Portland in the first four months of 2017 as there were in all of 2016, according to the Portland Police Bureau. That includes the racially motivated attack on a MAX train that left two people dead.

But fear of reporting crimes to police among immigrants and communities of color could mean that number is even higher.

Cue Portland United Against Hate, which began as a community conversation around the uptick in racially motivated hate crimes in Portland. Now \$350,000 in grants have been allocated to the group and the Office of Neighborhood Involvement to help community members track, respond to and prevent hate crimes themselves.

The grant money would allow community groups to create a central place to document hate crimes. The money also aims to help organizations develop the capacity to respond to bias and hate crimes through tasks such as community awareness-building.

Portland Commissioner Chloe Eudaly is in charge of the office running the grant program. She says the idea behind the program is to make sure the groups affected by hate crimes are represented in efforts to track them.

"Obviously that's going to be the Muslim community, the Latino community, LGBTQ community, African-Americans and other communities of color," Eudaly said. "These are groups that are always at risk. But we now have an administration that seems to be fomenting fear and prejudice and anger toward them."

But that fear is also reciprocated. Eudaly says the idea behind the grants is to give communities of color a safe place to report hate crimes.

“Unfortunately, I think [the] primary issue there is many members of these various communities may not feel comfortable coming forward to the police,” she said, “especially immigrants and refugees who feel their immigration status could put them at risk, or groups such as the African-American community who have historic and ongoing issues with police bureau.”

Eudaly says priority will go to groups considered most at-risk. Applications for the grants close August 14.