

Natural Resources

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6/8/2021

By Peggy Lynch, Natural Resources Coordinator and Natural Resources portfolio members

Budgets (Peggy Lynch & Team)

On June 7, the Natural Resources Subcommittee will hold a Work Session on the budget for the Oregon Parks and Recreation Dept. (OPRD) ([HB 5025](#)). The League provided [testimony](#) on the budget. The W&Ms [recommendation](#) includes a permanent Diversity, Equity and Inclusion position; however, many of the issues we raised were not addressed in the recommendations. We can hope that some of the policy bills still in W&Ms will be brought forward.

On June 8, the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board budget ([HB 5037/5038](#)) will be worked. The League provided [testimony](#) in support of a position related to the 100-year water vision and addressing climate change and were pleased to see that the W&Ms [recommendation](#) includes:

Package 110 Water Vision and Climate Change. This package increases Lottery Funds by \$326,653 and adds one limited duration position (1.00 FTE) to provide staff and contracting resources to assist with coordination of Oregon's 100-year Water Vision and the Governor's climate initiative

outlined in Executive Order 20-04. The limited duration position, a Water/Climate Coordinator (Operations & Policy Analyst 4) will plan and implement water and climate related initiatives while also considering issues of equity and environmental justice through engagement with impacted communities.

The Full W&Ms Committee moved the following four budgets to the Senate chamber for a vote:

- The Columbia River Gorge Commission budget ([SB 5508](#)). The Friends of the Gorge were disappointed that the lack of enforcement by the Commission on development in the Gorge was not addressed.
- The Dept. of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) budget ([SB 5530](#)). The League provided [testimony](#) in support and were pleased by the [LFO Recommendation](#) that includes monies to continue their work on housing, climate change and transportation as well as wildfire risk mapping work. Senator Taylor suggested that this agency is seeing “mission creep” and offered only a courtesy “yes” vote in the Subcommittee and Full W&Ms.
- The budget ([SB 5539](#)) for the Dept. of State Lands (DSL). The League provided [testimony](#) and the [LFO Recommendation](#) addresses some of LWVOR’s priorities.
- The Land Use Board of Appeals budget ([SB 5531](#)) includes two important items: a second staff attorney to help with their work and a Budget Note to begin planning on IT improvements, both of which the League supported in verbal testimony.
- Oregon State Marine Board (OSMB) ([HB 5020](#)). The LFO [recommendation](#) continues the program. For some reason, the budget received an unusual number of “no” votes in Full W&Ms, but it was passed to the House chamber.

Below are the other Natural Resource agency budgets and bills in W&Ms that LWVOR is following:

The League provided [testimony](#) in support of the Dept. of Agriculture budget ([SB 5502](#)). The League focused on water quality, pesticide issues,

addressing climate change and public health and safety in this agency. We highlighted our in-depth [study](#) on farmworkers done in 2000.

The League provided [testimony](#) in support of increasing funding and in support of fee increases for the Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ) budget ([SB 5516](#) and [5517](#)-fees) including the following bills:

[HB 2814A](#) addresses [dangerous diesel hotspots](#) that are not covered by 2019's [HB 2007](#) "Clean Diesel" bill. The bill would form a task force that will study policy options. The [Fiscal Impact Statement](#) indicates the need for \$446,596 GF and 1 FTE. The League provided [testimony](#) on the original bill.

[HB 3090](#) is a bill that would again fund the onsite septic loan program. Although the request is for \$2 million, we expect to see \$4-5 million allocated this session as wildfire rebuilding begins. The League and partners [support](#) and expect that grant funds might also be allocated. We also expect an amendment in [HB 2842](#), Healthy Homes, to include septic repair/replacement as part of that program's work. [HB 3127-4](#) contains \$20 million for this program so it is clear that funding for this program has wide support. The League is working with others to consolidate and/or clarify the best location for funding both grants and loans to address this serious public health issue. We also want to be sure the on-going program continues beyond addressing the needs of wildfire victims.

[HB 3269](#) directs DEQ to study and develop strategies to fund its Emergency Response Program. LWVOR submitted [testimony](#) in support. Here is the [Fiscal Impact Statement](#).

[SB 286 A](#) creates a new Environmental Justice Council at the Dept. of Environmental Quality. The League [supports](#). The [fiscal statement](#) notes \$3 million for DEQ and 3 FTE. We understand that \$1 million is a one-time cost.

[SB 581 A](#) removes the prohibition of deceptive labeling of recyclability and replaces it with a task force to study the issue and report to the 2022 Legislature. The [fiscal impact](#) of creating the task force is estimated to be \$150,973.

[SB 582 A](#) directs the Department of Environmental Quality to approve and oversee producer responsibility organizations and initiate studies of many aspects of the recycling system. The [fiscal impact](#) is estimated to be 1.8 million in 2021-23 and 10.8 million in 2023-25 but it would be funded through the producer fee system once fully running. If SB 582-9 is ultimately passed, [SB 581-1](#) becomes unnecessary as the truth in labeling task force is included in both.

The League provided [testimony](#) on the Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) budget ([HB 5009](#)) on May 3. The League supports specific programs around water and the establishment of a separate Habitat Division.

The League provided [written](#) and verbal testimony on the Dept. of Forestry budget ([SB 5518](#)). The League is very engaged in this department's work on forestry practices, the nexus between logging and drinking water sources and climate change work as well as assuring their fiscal management is working for Oregonians. The following bills are a part of that broad discussion:

[SB 762 A](#) is the omnibus wildfire bill. The League is engaged with a wide group of organizations in support of this bill. See this new [website](#) for details and instructions on how you can advocate for this important bill. The League [supports](#) this bill because of the urgency of the work needed, but we expect intense evaluation of the fiscal so that we get the work done in a safe, effective and fiscally prudent manner. We understand that a new amendment is being proposed clarifying a number of issues and is now with the various agencies to provide a true fiscal for the bill. Included is a requirement that the agency develop a 20-year strategic plan and that the small woodlands grant program has clear criteria. The

Dept. of Forestry also needs to reconcile this bill with their budget requests.

[HB 2722A](#) is an alternate omnibus wildfire bill. The League believes this bill is no longer being considered.

[HB 3160](#) establishes an Oregon Wildfire Preparedness and Community Protection Fund and directs the State Fire Marshal, State Forestry Department and Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board to make expenditures from the fund for various activities related to restoration, protection and recovery from wildfires. House Revenue adopted the [-4 amendment](#) and the bill was sent to W&Ms with a \$45 million price tag. We expect some of the monies may be part of [SB 762](#).

Dept. of Geology and Mineral Industries: [HB 3127](#) includes \$1,250,000 GF for the agency to provide geotechnical analysis to assess risks of landslides and debris flows. This money might be included in the end-of-session bill.

The following policy bills are related to the DLCD budget but were not included in the agency budget. We will need to wait to see if these bills are approved this session.

[HB 2488 A](#) now addresses inequities in Goal One, public involvement and has an \$800k fiscal. That money was part of the Governor's budget for the agency but without clear policy direction and is not now part of the LFO recommendation for the DLCD budget. Senator Taylor and Rep. Pham both expressed disappointment that the money for this effort was not included in the DLCD budget (see above) so we expect them to work to get this bill considered before the end of session.

[HB 2520 A](#) relates to the state land use system's Energy Goal and requires LCDC to do a rulemaking to provide better clarity on how developers can site renewable projects on Goal 3, 4 or 5 lands (on acreages below the Energy Facility Siting Council requirements) that counties decide on under today's rules related to the exceptions process

for those lands. The bill requests \$300k for rulemaking and, due to the work deadlines in the bill, has an emergency clause so the bill would go into effect July 1, 2021.

[HB 2603A](#) would regulate undersea cable projects. The measure also directs the Ocean Policy Advisory Council to review Part four of the Territorial Sea Plan and conduct a study relating to undersea cables. An amendment to the Plan may be needed to more clearly address undersea cables as they attach to our coastline. The [Staff Measure Summary](#) explains the amended bill. The [Fiscal Impact Statement](#) indicates a need for DLCDC to have .88 FTE and approximately \$200k. There could be an additional \$300k in expenses as the program moves forward.

[HB 2918 A](#) has been assigned to the Natural Resources Subcommittee for consideration. It requires local governments to compile and submit an inventory of surplus real property owned by the local government to the Department of Land Conservation and Development no later than January 1 of each even-numbered year. DLCDC estimates the cost of developing the online system to be \$68,000 for the 2021-23 biennium and the cost of maintaining the system to be approximately \$16,000 for subsequent biennia. This estimate reflects the cost of contracting with the Oregon State University's Institute for Natural Resources to create and maintain the online system.

[HB 3371 A](#) was not included in the Dept. of State Lands budget presentation. It requires DSL to consider potential risks in entering into agreements for authorized use of submerged and submersible lands and allows the department to require risk mitigation or insurance. The [Staff Measure Summary](#) explains the amended bill. Here is the [Fiscal Impact Statement](#) "light".

The League provided [testimony](#) on the budget (SB 5545) for the Water Resources Dept. (WRD).

We also provided testimony on multiple policy bills related to this department's work, including:

[HB 2018A](#), related to groundwater management. The League provided [comments](#). The preliminary [fiscal statement](#) indicates a \$2.4 million cost and 5.75 FTE.

[HB 2142](#), a bill that increases certain fees for water permitting, was sent to W&Ms without recommendation as to passage. The League supports this critical funding bill. It splits the cost of processing permit applications 50% General Fund and 50% to permittees and would return 2.5 FTE to the department for permit processing.

[HB 2145 A](#) addresses modernization of well construction and will establish a grant and loan program for repair or replacement of wells. The [Fiscal Impact Statement](#) does not include monies in the loan program so we hope there will be money added in W&Ms. The League provided [testimony](#) in support. [HB 3127](#) provides \$500,000 for well repair in Lincoln County. The Water Resources Dept. recently launched the surface water and well water private drinking water survey and believe that a \$2 million ask is appropriate this session. The damage includes anything from damage to the well, pump, pump house structure, water lines, electrical panels, etc. As such, we will likely need to broaden [HB 2145](#) to address more than just the well, at least as it pertains to wildfires, such as damage to the well pump, pump house structure, water lines, electrical panels, etc. We have asked for an amendment to address this concern.

[HB 3105 A](#) would fund continuation of the four place-based planning water programs and provide staffing for the same. The bill requests \$200k for the planning efforts. The League provided verbal testimony in support.

Bills with multiple agency budget implications:

[HB 2143 A](#) is a bill that will update the annual fees for hydroelectric projects and provides shared revenue for the Water Resources Dept., Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife and the Dept. of Environmental Quality.

The League [supports](#) this critical funding bill. The [Fiscal Impact Statement](#) for the amended bill provides less than the agencies anticipated, leaving DEQ with about a \$400k shortfall in this area.

[HB 2251 A](#) is a bill that would fund regional water planning efforts and perhaps move the “water vision’ forward. The League has been supportive of the Governor’s 100-year water vision and also supportive of place-based planning and provided verbal testimony expressing both support for portions of the bill as well as concerns about the lack of discussion on the policy included in the -1 amendment. Here is the [Fiscal Impact Statement](#). The House Water Committee heard a [presentation](#) on April 29 from a group called “Oregon Water Justice” that addresses the needs of vulnerable communities.

[HB 3093 A](#) directs the Oregon Health Authority, in coordination with DEQ, to develop and implement a strategy for monitoring and responding to freshwater harmful algal blooms and to establish a technical advisory committee. The [Fiscal Impact Statement](#) requests \$260,189 for DEQ and \$232,645 for OHA and 1 position each. The League supplied [testimony](#) in support of the -8 amendment and would support the -10 which was adopted.

[HB 3127-4](#), a bill that now includes assistance to the victims of the eight major wildfires from last fall was approved by the House Wildfire Recovery Committee and sent to W&Ms. The [amendment](#) includes a [list](#) of funding requests with the accompanying state agency where such funding might be budgeted. We expect that W&Ms might well place these requests into those budget bills or the end of session bill. There was an additional [list](#) of items that are more long-term needs and may or may not be funded OR may go into other bills.

Bills outside of the 14 Natural Resource Agencies:

The League [supports](#) POP 417 of the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) budget ([HB 5024](#)). There are other areas of the OHA budget the League also supports. See other League reports for that information.

[SB 29](#) is a bill that would return the area around the State Capitol to the Dept. of Administrative Services from State Parks with funding for maintenance and has a \$3.5 million fiscal. The League supports.

[HB 2218 A](#) directs the Oregon Business Development Department to study the impact of laws related to wetlands and economic activity. The League provided [testimony](#). The [Fiscal Impact Statement](#) is estimated to be \$250-500k for OBDD. The League would have preferred to invest directly into work by the Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments.

[HB 2928 A](#) would regulate the use of tear gas and pepper spray by police against crowds. The [Fiscal Impact Statement](#) indicates a cost of about \$1.5 million to the Oregon State Police.

[HB 2386](#) creates the Oregon Independent Science Review Board within the Institute for Natural Resources at Oregon State University. The League provided [testimony](#) in support. The estimated cost this biennium is \$272,780 General Funds.

[HB 3114](#) will provide approximately \$2 million in funding for the Oregon Ocean Science Trust and for others doing research on ocean acidification. The League sent [testimony](#) in support to the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee members and has reached out to W&Ms to encourage this funding.

[HB 3040 A](#) requires the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department (OHCS) to conduct a comprehensive study of system development charges (SDCs) in consultation with DLCD, DEQ, the Department of Revenue, and the Oregon Business Development Department per the [Staff Measure Summary](#). The League sent our [concerns](#) to committee members on the original bill. A [Fiscal Impact Statement](#) was issued sending the bill to W&Ms.

See the Climate Report for bills supported by the League's Climate Team.

Air Quality (Susan Mates)

The DEQ's [Regional Haze Program](#) aims to improve visibility in wilderness areas and national parks to attain natural visibility conditions by 2064. The program will regulate [32 large facilities](#). A [public hearing](#) about proposed rule amendments will be held on June 28, and public comments will be accepted until June 30.

Coastal Issues

[HB 2605A](#) brings Oregon in line with California and Washington in applying building codes to new public buildings in the Tsunami Inundation Zone. The A3 amendment was adopted and the bill awaits a Second Reading in the Senate.

Elliott State Forest

A working draft of the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for the Elliott State Research Forest [is now available](#). A couple of information sessions were provided where the public could ask questions. Among the concerns from the League: an anticipated 60-year rotation for logging in the forest instead of a more climate/carbon friendly 80 years and a realization that OSU will need to also budget for monitoring any adopted HCP. OSU has yet to provide a clear path to decoupling the forest from the Common School Fund where it is an asset.

Forestry (James Cannon/Josie Koehne)

Senator Golden's big wildfire omnibus bill [SB 762](#) with the -6 amendment was sent to Ways & Means on April 23 and a big campaign is currently underway to provide support. We are working in coalition with other organizations, and asking League members to [take this simple action in support](#).

Timber Tax Bills: There are only two timber tax bills, [HB 2357](#) with the -A7 amendment which passed June 3 with a due pass recommendation and is awaiting a second reading at the House desk, and HB 2070, also still alive this session. [HB 2070](#), the standard Harvest Tax bill which is submitted by the Governor for the Oregon Dept. of Forestry is key to the agency's budget passage. Unlike other taxes, the rates must be set and approved by a 3/5ths majority vote by the Legislature every biennium. These rates are calculated by complex procedures and formulas based on the number of board feet harvested and predicted for the following biennium after the ODF and other budgets are set. A public hearing was held on two new amendments in House Revenue on June 2 that would streamline the process by making the tax rate permanent, adjusted annually to the western region's Consumer Price Index (inflation). Chair Nathanson submitted her -2 amendment that sets one permanent rate of \$ \$4.5256 (up slightly from the existing \$4.13 rate). Currently, the tax revenue is distributed this way:

1. Forest Research Lab (OSU): \$0.9000 (21.8%)
2. Oregon Forestland Protection Fund (Emergency Fire Cost Committee): \$.6250 (15.1 %)
3. Oregon Forest Practices Act (ODF): \$1.3872 (33.6%)
4. Forestry education (OSU): \$.1000 (2.4%)
5. Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI): \$1.1200 (27.1%)

The -2 retains the same entities receiving the funds, in the same proportions as they receive now. Rep. Marsh's -1 amendment is even simpler. It retains all the rates above, and adjusts each for inflation. These amendments make for a far simpler and transparent process that the LWVOR supported in testimony [here](#). During public testimony, three timber industry trade associations opposed both amendments claiming they are, in fact, less transparent than biennial tax setting hearings and the CPI adjustments will not reflect actual economic changes experienced by the forestry industries.

On June 8 at 8:30 a.m. there will be an informational session in [the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire](#) jointly with the

House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee on the long-awaited Private Forest Accord with conservationists and timber interests working towards an agreement (set up in 2020's [SB 1602](#)). They are working on agreements on possible Forest Practices Act improvements around salmon-bearing streams. Separately, the Dept. of Forestry is working on improvements to their public notification system (FERNS) related to forestry work including aerial spraying.

ODF is working on their own Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for state-managed forest lands that is designed to protect endangered species on public lands. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Review Process will begin in a few months to allow the public to provide comments on the proposed HCP.

[The Board of Forestry](#) has its first full 9am to 4 PM meeting on June 9 and will discuss both of these items (Items 6 and 8) in the afternoon. In the morning session, they will hear a fire season readiness report and will discuss the national recruitment of the permanent State Forester expected late this fall to replace the newly appointed interim State Forester, Nancy Hirsch, who was previously the Deputy State Forester before retirement. The League is also looking forward to learning how the agency will implement the financial contractor's recommendations on how to improve both accounts receivables and payables and other business practices—consolidating them at the Salem office.

The Oregon Department of Forestry is inviting public comment on planned projects, timber sales and other management activities in state-owned forests for fiscal year 2022. These plans lay out the on-the-ground activities expected to take place in the coming fiscal year, such as timber harvests, reforestation, and trail improvements. Starting May 7 through Monday, June 21, Oregonians can weigh in on the draft annual operations plans for state forests in the Astoria, Forest Grove, Klamath-Lake, Tillamook, West Oregon, and Western Lane Districts, which includes the Tillamook, Clatsop, Sun Pass and Gilchrist state forests. Draft plans are available at: <https://www.oregon.gov/ODF/Working/Pages/StateForests.aspx>.

ODF is offering several convenient avenues for those who want to provide input on the draft plans:

- An online survey can be found at <https://forms.gle/TEqVxgGJ7HkutRSb9>
- Online comments are also received through ODF's comments page: <https://www.oregon.gov/odf/recreation/pages/comment.aspx>
- Comments can be emailed to
- Comments can also be mailed to ODF Public Affairs, 2600 State St., Salem, OR 97310.
- Contact: Jason Cox, ODF Public Affairs Specialist, 503-945-7427,

See more information on Wildfire Recovery below.

Land Use/Housing (Peggy Lynch)

We expect to see funding in the end-of-session bill or the Housing and Community Services agency budget for a continuation of the Regional Housing Needs Analysis that was part of [HB 2003](#) (2019). An informational hearing was held on June 1 in the House Housing Committee on [HB 2003](#) (2019) with a great [slide show](#) on this project. Stakeholders provided a [memo](#) as well.

[SB 16](#), a bill that would allow up to 200 acres of ranchland in Malheur County to be converted to “ranchettes” has been sent to House Rules. The League will continue to [oppose](#) and focus on both taking agricultural lands from production and our concern that these 100 homes would need to drill domestic “exempt wells”—using up to 15,000 gallons of water a day. The homes would also need septic systems. In Eastern Oregon water quantity and quality are both of grave concern. There are critical groundwater and groundwater management areas designated in Malheur County.

[HB 3072 A](#) is a bill that allows the governing body of a city, upon petition from a landowner, to amend city’s urban growth boundary (UGB) to allow inclusion of land to be solely used for workforce housing or both

workforce housing and workforce commercial development, which is subject to an affordable housing covenant of no less than 60 years. Here is the full [Staff Measure Summary](#). The bill has been sent to Rules without recommendation where the League hopes it will die.

See also the Housing Report in other sections of this Legislative Report.

Parks and Recreation

[SB 289 A](#) is awaiting final approval in the House next week. The League supports this bill as amended in recognition of the need for all people to feel safe on Oregon's public lands.

Water (Peggy Lynch/Amelia Nestler)

The Water Resources Commission held a meeting on June 3 and received a number of interesting reports

(https://apps.wrd.state.or.us/apps/misc/wrd_notice_view/Default.aspx?notice_id=41) including one created by the Oregon Business Council on their vision of improvements needed in Oregon's water laws and rules.

[SB 859](#) would increase the amount that the State Marine Board can hold in its Salvaged Vessel Subaccount to \$1 million. The League provided [testimony](#) in support in order to provide additional funding for responding to the 200+ abandoned vessels in Oregon's waters. The bill is now in House Rules.

[HB 3166 A](#) is a bill related to water measurement. The League supports having good data in order for the Dept. of Water Resources to be able to process water right applications and transfers before, like surface water, groundwater is over appropriated. It was moved to House Rules where it will die this session. The Work Group will continue during the interim. An informational meeting on this bill was held in House Water on June 3 where a [slide show](#) between two of the Work Group members presented places of agreement and "work to be done".

Sixteen counties have now requested drought emergency declarations this year with eight receiving the Governor's drought declaration. Deschutes County is considering doing the same. Here is the latest Oregon drought declaration status [map](#). [What is drought?](#) *"Simply put, drought is a water shortage. It's typically the result of long periods with insufficient precipitation."* The [US Drought Monitor](#) indicates 100% of the state is experiencing some form of drought conditions. [Changes over recent weeks](#) include expansion of D3 (extreme drought) coverage in Gilliam and Morrow Counties due to poor soil moisture conditions. Additionally, coverage of D1 (moderate drought) conditions has expanded in the northeastern corner of the state due to precipitation deficits at lower elevations.

As summer approaches, and more communities and recreational areas around the state begin reopening amid the COVID-19 outbreak, Oregon Health Authority (OHA) reminds people heading outdoors to be on the look-out for cyanobacteria blooms that can produce toxins when recreating in Oregon lakes, rivers and reservoirs. To learn if an advisory has been issued or lifted for a specific water body, visit the [Harmful Algae Bloom website](#) or call the Oregon Public Health Division toll-free information line at 877-290-6767.)

Wildfires (James Cannon/Josie Koehne/Peggy Lynch)

The House Special Committee on Wildfire Recovery adopted a [-2 amendment](#) to [HB 3126](#) to address an issue with allowing a quick process for a small water district that was destroyed by the Labor Day fires to connect to the Medford Water District. The bill was sent to the floor with a "do pass" recommendation.

[HB 2272](#) was a placeholder study bill in the House Special Committee on Wildfire Recovery. Chair Clem introduced a replacement [-4 amendment](#) to provide a building site for wildfire victims in Lane County for the development of a permanent recreational vehicle park or campground, with fast zoning and permitting approvals under specified conditions. A work session was held on May 28 and was voted out of the

committee with the proposed amendment and is headed to the House floor.

The House Wildfire Recovery Committee had a Public Hearing and Work Session on [HB 3367](#) and adopted the -2 amendment to establish two new Funds: Lost Revenue Stabilization Fund to provide monies to help local governments with loss of revenue due to the wildfires and the School Stabilization Fund to help school districts with loss of revenue due to the wildfires. The funds are needed in order to allow the legislature to provide funding for these purposes, so the bill was passed to W&Ms.

The Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue unanimously passed [HB 2341](#) at a Work Session on June 2. The bill allows county tax collectors to prorate property taxes during a year that qualifying fire damage occurs.

The House Revenue Committee unanimously passed [HB 2630](#) revised by amendment -3 on June 2. The bill provides that, for five school years, calculations of weighted average daily membership made for purposes of distributions of state monies to school districts may not be decreased for school districts impacted by wildfires in 2020. The -3 amendment prescribes the methods to provide funding stability to certain school districts impacted by wildfires in 2020. It establishes the School Stabilization Subaccount for Wildfire-Impacted Schools within the Statewide Education Initiatives Account to support such funding. Such funding is repealed on July 1, 2025.

A new online [tool](#), released by the Oregon Department of Forestry, allows Oregon residents to track current wildfire risk to their exact location anywhere in the state. The tool, part of the [Oregon Explorer website](#), uses a variety of data to calculate how high that risk is for any given location.