

# Letter from the Editor



Former Governor Tom McCall said, “Heroes are not giant statutes framed against a red sky. They are ordinary citizens who take responsibility for the future of their community.”

Part of taking responsibility is becoming informed. Environmental issues are complex and an informed citizen is best armed to educate their neighbors and elected officials about the threats we face and the solutions offered by environmental organizations.

At the same time, citizens do not need to become experts to become part of the debate about Oregon’s environmental future. It is wrong to poison our kids with toxic chemicals. It is wrong to destroy the last of our wild salmon runs. People and candidates should not shy away from speaking up for the values they hold, and for holding legislators accountable to carry out policies that flow from those values.

Legislators and candidates for the Legislature have a greater responsibility to be well-versed. Before casting votes that determine the environmental future of Oregon, legislators need to develop a working knowledge of the key issues.

This Handbook aims to meet the needs of legislators, candidates and citizens. It is laid out in 19 easy to read chapters, covering the most important environmental issues facing Oregon.

We begin with a summary of the shared legislative priorities of the Oregon Conservation Network for the 2005 legislative session. Then, each chapter aims to be a 4-8 page summary of key background information about an issue, focused on the State of Oregon’s role. Also included in each chapter at the conclusion are a set of legislative priorities and a summary of the key messages included in the chapter. Finally, because readers will often want more detailed information, the chapters conclude with a listing of experts and resources.

We hope that you find the Environmental Handbook valuable. We are continually working to improve it from year to year and we welcome your feedback. Please email us at [olcvf@olcv.org](mailto:olcvf@olcv.org) or call us at (503) 227-8073.

Most importantly, we hope you use this Handbook to begin a dialogue with others – neighbors, friends, candidates, elected officials, and the public. We provide it in the hopes that we can spark more and better conversations between legislators and citizens, and among citizens. In the end, our children’s future will be best protected by Oregonians who take the time both to learn and to act on that knowledge.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Jonathan Poisner". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Jonathan Poisner  
Executive Director

# *Oregon League of Conservation Voters Education Fund's* **Environmental Handbook for the Oregon Legislature**

February 2007

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The Oregon League of Conservation Voters Education Fund is a non-profit conservation organization. OLCV Education Fund provides education and training to enhance the effective participation of Oregon's environmental community in the political process, and educates candidates, elected officials, the media, and the public about environmental issues.



The Environmental Handbook is part of our ongoing commitment to facilitate the efforts of concerned Oregonians who believe in using the political process to protect Oregon's environment.

*The Environmental Handbook is part of our ongoing commitment to facilitate the efforts of concerned Oregonians who believe in using the political process to protect Oregon's environment.*

The Environmental Handbook is an easy-to-use source of information about some of the most critical environmental issues facing Oregon today. In each chapter, we provide background information on a specific environmental issue, discuss current policy, outline environmental priorities for the legislature and state agencies, and provide key messages. Each chapter also includes a list of experts to contact for more information on that issue. In addition, we provide contact information for Oregon Legislators, and resources on our legislative process.

A collaborative project, the Handbook is written by dozens of environmental experts throughout Oregon. For their generous time, we would like to thank: 1000 Friends of Oregon, American Rivers, Audubon Society of Portland, Bicycle Transportation Alliance, Defenders of Wildlife, Environmental Justice Action Group, Fair and Clean Energy Coalition, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Greenhouse Network, League of Women Voters Oregon, Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides, Oregon Environmental Council, Oregon Natural Desert Association, OPAL (Organizing People, Activating Leaders), Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition, Oregon State Public Interest Research Group, Oregon Toxics Alliance, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, Recycling Advocates, Sierra Club, Trout Unlimited, WaterWatch of Oregon, Save Our Wild Salmon Coalition, and Willamette Riverkeeper.

We also extend our appreciation to the various state agencies that have provided relevant information and statistics over the years, including: Oregon Departments of Energy, Environmental Quality, Fish and Wildlife, Forestry, Human Services, Land Conservation and Development, Agriculture, Parks and Recreation, State Lands, and Water Resources; Oregon's Legislative Fiscal Office; as well as federal agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Forest Service.

**For more information about the Oregon League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, call (503) 227-8073, email [info@olcveducationfund.org](mailto:info@olcveducationfund.org), write to 320 SW Stark, Suite 530, Portland, Oregon 97204, or visit [www.olcveducationfund.org](http://www.olcveducationfund.org).**

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On the cover: Canoe photo by Travis Williams, Willamette Riverkeeper

# *Priorities for a Healthy Oregon*

## **Introduced by the Oregon Conservation Network**

*For the 2007 Legislative Session*

Oregon's environmental community enters this legislative session with a clear set of priorities. Oregon Conservation Network's "Priorities for a Healthy Oregon" include expanding Oregon's electronic recycling program, investing in renewable energy, decreasing dependence on foreign oil through the promotion of biofuels, reforming Measure 37, and addressing the issue of toxics in our waterways. We also remain committed to retaining Oregon's landmark environmental safeguards including the protection of forests, farmland, rivers, fish and wildlife. The Oregon Conservation Network (OCN) is a coalition of over forty leading environmental organizations committed to protecting Oregon for future generations. Please visit [www.OregonPriorities.org](http://www.OregonPriorities.org) for more information.

### **Priority: Expanding Oregon's Electronic Recycling Program**

Hundreds of thousands of Oregonians have old computers in their basement. The dilemma is how to dispose of these computers safely. Computers contain toxic chemicals such as lead and mercury that pose serious problems if not properly disposed. With an estimated 27,000 tons of electronic waste inadequately disposed in Oregon landfills in 2002 alone, this is clearly an issue that needs to be handled. Our goal is to establish a statewide product stewardship system that gives all Oregonians easy access to recycling programs for televisions, personal computers and small personal computer peripherals, printers and scanners.

### **Priority: Reforming Measure 37**

The true impact of Measure 37 became apparent in the closing weeks of 2006. Our quality of life is threatened by over 7,000 claims filed statewide on hundreds of thousands of acres for irresponsible development. Throughout our state, neighbors and the environment are being held hostage by this flawed law. Measure 37 has unleashed demands to build subdivisions on Steens Mountain and mine pumice at Newberry Crater National Volcanic Monument. Many of these proposals are coming from speculators like the Plum Creek Timber Corporation, which has filed claims to turn 32,000 acres of Coast Range forests into subdivisions. Meanwhile, the measure does not actually work for the "mom and pop" claimants featured so prominently in campaign ads. Our goal is to reform Measure 37 so that the law provides real fairness for all Oregonians while respecting our natural heritage and the rights of our neighbors.

### **Priority: Promote Clean and Renewable Energy**

Oregon has a significant opportunity to capitalize on our abundance of clean renewable energy resources, such as wind, solar, wave, and geothermal power to benefit our environment, our energy independence, and our economy. Developing these resources curbs global warming pollution and keeps money and jobs in our communities, creating a healthy future for our children while making us more self-reliant. This priority builds on a long record of success in encouraging progressive energy policy in Oregon. We are committed to a renewable energy standard requiring that 25% of Oregon's electricity come from renewable energy sources by 2025, as well as other policies to increase investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy.

### **Priority: Energy Independence through Renewable Fuels**

Oregonians have an historic opportunity to move America closer to energy independence. Biofuels produced in Oregon for our cars and trucks create jobs, promote economic development in rural

communities, reduce global warming pollution, and promote cleaner air. Our goal is a flexible fuel standard targeted toward local, in-state production to establish a stable market for farmers and entrepreneurs on the cutting edge of producing and marketing Oregon biofuels.

### **Priority: Close the Toxic Pollution Loophole**

Oregon is blessed with many outstanding rivers, where we swim, fish, and recreate. However, under a major loophole in clean water law, industrial polluters and some cities are dumping toxic material directly into rivers in what are called toxic mixing zones. These toxic discharges are at levels that exceed clean water standards and include persistent bio-accumulative chemicals such as lead, cadmium, mercury and arsenic. Our goal is to begin the phase-out of toxic mixing zones from Oregon's rivers and streams, while increasing the funding for DEQ to better catalogue, monitor and address excessive dumping of toxic chemicals in our rivers.

### **Protecting the Oregon dream: stopping assaults on environmental safeguards**

In each of the last six sessions the Legislature passed many bills aimed at reversing existing environmental safeguards. The rollback problem was most pronounced in 1999 when nineteen bills that harmed Oregon's environment were passed by the Legislature, with fourteen vetoed by the Governor. Defeating such rollbacks remains pivotal to the OCN. Many anti-environmental legislative proposals are poised for introduction during the 2007 legislative session. Our goal is to stop the rollbacks.

### **Contacts**

Expanding Oregon's Electronic  
Recycling Program  
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Close the Toxic Pollution Loophole  
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Protecting the Oregon Dream  
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## Important Information for the Oregon Legislature

The Oregon Legislature is in regular session starting in January of every odd-numbered year for approximately 6 months. The 2003 session adjourned on August 27th and broke the record for the longest session. In recent years, partisan battles and budget problems have led to increasingly lengthy sessions.

The period between legislative sessions is called the interim. During this time, the Legislature may convene for special sessions, to vote on appointments, and more. Also during this time, state agencies are implementing policies as directed by the Legislature. View the Legislature's Bills and Laws page at [www.leg.state.or.us/billsset.htm](http://www.leg.state.or.us/billsset.htm)

### Legislative Leadership

Senate President	Peter Courtney	503-986-1600
Senate President Pro-Tempore	Margaret Carter	503-986-1722
Senate Majority Leader/Office	Kate Brown	503-986-1700
Senate Republican Leader/Office	Ted Ferrioli	503-986-1950
House Majority Leader	Dave Hunt	503-986-1440
Speaker of the House	Jeff Merkley	503-986-1200
Speaker Pro Tempore	Diane Rosenbaum	503-986-1442
Republican Leader	Wayne Scott	503-986-1400



### Contacting Oregon Legislators

You can determine who represents you and your House and Senate district numbers at [www.leg.state.or.us/findlegsltr/findset.htm](http://www.leg.state.or.us/findlegsltr/findset.htm). A complete list of Legislators and their 2005 Legislative Session contact information is provided on the next two pages.

### Stay Informed on Key Environmental Issues

Conservation groups across the state work together through the Oregon Conservation Network (OCN) to protect our environmental heritage in the Oregon Legislature and our state agencies. Among other things, OCN produces "SalemWatch," an email update sent once-per-month in the interim and once-per-week during the session. SalemWatch keeps Oregonians abreast of key legislative and agency actions on environmental issues. Sign up for SalemWatch at [www.olcveducationfund.org](http://www.olcveducationfund.org). Simply click on OCN, SalemWatch, and then enter your email address.

# 2006 Oregon House of Representatives

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## 2006 Senate Contact Information

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Senator Kate Brown	D-21	503-986-1700	Email: sen.katebrown@state.or.us
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## OLCV Education Fund

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