

**From:** Representative Greg Walden Representative.Greg.Walden@mail.house.gov   
**Subject:** Rebuilding and Recovery in Eastern Oregon



News from Representative Walden

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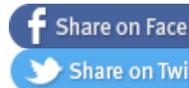
## Rebuilding and Recovery in Eastern Oregon

My staff and I have been working with local, state, and federal officials to assist people with the flood recovery efforts in Umatilla County and other areas in northeast Oregon. The damage is horrible, but thanks to quick action to protect levies an even worse situation was averted.



*Damage of Pendleton industrial park.*

My office stands ready to help however we can during the recovery process. Please reach out to my La Grande office at 541-624-2400 if we can be of assistance. I will continue to provide updates as necessary.



### E-MAIL UPDATES

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*Damage of Milton Freewater levy and the surrounding area.*

## **Monitoring the Coronavirus**

As the Republican Leader of the Energy and Commerce Committee, I have led Congressional Member [briefings on the outbreak](#) of the coronavirus and am in regular contact with federal officials. Last week, I participated in a [coronavirus roundtable](#) in the Situation Room at the White House where we were briefed by the lead agencies tracking the virus and implementing policies to protect Americans at home and abroad, including CDC, NIH, DoD and DHS.

During the meeting at the White House, I also raised the need to evacuate the Americans being quarantined on the Diamond Princess cruise ship in Japan, which included several people from the Pacific Northwest.



*Rep. Walden with Japan Prime Minister Abe.*

In Japan, I met with our State Department team and personally thanked

Prime Minister Abe and his team for Japan's help in dealing with the coronavirus and, especially, for providing ground transportation to evacuate the Americans.

There is much we don't know about how this virus spreads and how long a person who doesn't show outward signs of the virus can spread it to others.

With no treatments available to stop the virus we have to rely on basic public health efforts to stop its spread. I can only imagine how frustrating that must be to those who "feel fine" and want to go home. However, they could still spread the disease to others along the way.

The Administration is responding with every tool that Congress has given them. They have the funding, they have the resources, and they are working together with our friends and allies around the globe to provide assistance. Nobody does this better than the United States. Together we are using every bit of science we have and all the public health resources we have to address this and protect the American people. The situation is rapidly changing, but I am receiving frequent updates and will continue to share relevant information as it's made available.

In addition to the threat of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus, let us not forget that according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC): "...so far this season there have been at least 26 million flu illnesses, 250,000 hospitalizations and 14,000 deaths from flu." If you haven't already, I urge you to get your flu shot today.

## **Protecting the Columbia-Snake River System**

The Columbia-Snake River system provides low-cost and carbon-free power, balances renewables on our grid, and supports transportation and irrigation that are vital to our rural economies. Hydropower makes up 80 percent of the carbon-free energy in the Northwest and is the source of roughly 40 percent of Oregon's power. It plays a key role in making wind and solar work on our power grid by balancing out the intermittent nature of their power generation. For example, dams can hold back water and store it when there is a lot of wind energy, and then release it and ramp up hydropower generation when there is no wind. The system of dams also allows for cost-effective transportation of goods along the river with less carbon emissions than by truck or rail.

That's why many of us in the region were shocked when out of nowhere Governor Brown sent Washington Governor Inslee a letter advocating for dam removal.

Governor Brown chose the most extreme environmental agenda over the needs of rural Oregon. And what's her carbon offset and firm load power substitute? Meanwhile, she and the super-majority Democrats in Salem are about to stick Oregon consumers with high cost cap-and-trade regulation and taxation that will eventually lead to economic stagnation. Now's not the time to trash practical, carbon-free, and economy-boosting hydropower.

## **Strengthening Relations with Japan**

Japan and Oregon have an important relationship when it comes to trade. They are a top market for Oregon wheat and represent great opportunities to grow markets for beef, blueberries, potatoes, wine, and other Oregon

grow markets for beer, blueberries, potatoes, wine, and other Oregon products. In 2018, Oregon exported \$2 billion in goods to Japan alone.

In January, the first phase of the Japan-U.S. trade deal went into effect, which was welcome news for Oregon's farmers and ranchers. This deal helps level the playing field for American agriculture and provides both certainty and a needed boost for our farmers, ranchers, and our local communities.



*Rep. Walden with Japan Prime Minister Abe.*

I recently visited Japan in an effort to continue to strengthen our important relationship. While I was there, I discussed with Japanese Prime Minister Abe and other government officials the trade issues that remain for phase two of the trade deal. We also had the chance to discuss the upcoming Olympics and our nation's shared efforts to monitor and fight the coronavirus, as I mentioned earlier in this letter.

As we progress with negotiations of phase two of the trade deal, I will continue to keep you updated and advocate on behalf of Oregon's farmers, ranchers, and small businesses.

## **President Trump Delivers for Rural Oregon**

Earlier this month, I attended President Trump's [State of the Union](#) and was reminded of the great record of success the President has delivered -- including record low unemployment, breakthroughs in medical research, and the recent signing of the groundbreaking [new trade agreement](#) between the United States, Mexico, and Canada (USMCA). This new agreement will modernize our trade relationships and support the nearly 7,500 jobs in Oregon that rely on fair trade between these three countries. This is a win for

Oregon farmers, ranchers, winemakers, and other entrepreneurs.



*Rep. Walden with President Trump after the State of the Union.*

*Photo By: Caroline Brehman/CQ Roll Call*

The Trump Administration also recently provided a new definition of [“Waters of the United States”](#) (WOTUS). For years, farmers and ranchers across Oregon have expressed their concerns to me about the heavy-handed Obama-era definition of WOTUS. They stressed that their intermittent stream or irrigation ditch would be subject to the burdensome and overreaching federal regulation. The EPA’s new definition of WOTUS will both protect our environment and our rural communities.

## **Improving Federal Forest Management**

I have said it time and time again -- we need to improve our forest management. Before we know it fire season will be here, and we can’t keep putting off the critical need to modernize our policies. In May, I introduced [the Resilient Federal Forest Act of 2019](#), which would make significant reforms to forest management policy and reduce the risk of wildfire in Oregon and nationwide.





Click [here](#) or the image above to watch the remarks.

Last month, I spoke at the House Energy and Commerce hearing on the [impact of wildfires](#). As a result of massive forest fires, communities in the Second District have suffered from some of the worst air quality in the world. Unfortunately, unwieldy government regulations are standing in the way of common-sense strategies for reducing the risk of fires, like hazardous tree removal and improvements to the aging power-grid.

Dave Markham, who works for Central Electric Cooperative in Redmond, testified that in April they tried to move an old power pole 20 feet to mitigate against the threat of wildfire. However, the Forest Service did not get around to the application until October -- too late to get in and do the work before the snow. This is why we've got to reform the federal rules and laws that prevent utilities from doing what they know needs to be done to protect our great National Forests and the communities around them. Delays in these sorts of maintenance efforts can have deadly consequences, especially when combined with our poorly managed federal forests, that frankly, are overstocked and waiting to burn.



## Walden wants to cut wildfire red tape

*Government red tape makes it hard to reduce fire hazards in forested areas. U.S. Rep. Greg Walden (R-Hood River) says he wants to change that. He said that forests need thinning, and cited an example from the Central Electric Cooperative in Redmond. In April, they wanted to move a utility pole 20 feet to reduce fire risk.*

[Click here](#) to read more from My Columbia Basin.

## Empowering & Connecting Communities Through Broadband

At the [State of the Union](#), I was glad to hear President Trump reaffirm his commitment to ensuring that rural Americans have access to high-speed internet, something that is essential if we are going to bridge the urban/rural digital divide. The internet serves as America's single most important driver of economic growth and job creation.

A few days ago, I emphasized the importance of expanding rural broadband at an Energy and Commerce Committee hearing about the current barriers to widespread broadband adoption. It's only been a decade since broadband deployment has exploded into an everyday necessity, and without first addressing the lack of broadband availability, any federal investment

addressing the lack of broadband availability, any federal resources put forward for broadband adoption could further enlarge the digital divide if not done carefully.

## **Fighting to Protect Oregon from Opioids and Illicit Stimulants**

Earlier this month, President Trump signed into law a bill that expands the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) ability to access the tools necessary to combat fentanyl-related substances. With a potential of more than 3,000 fentanyl analogues, the importance of the DEA being able to go after all fentanyl-related substances can't be understated. Synthetic opioids are deadly -- in just one year they've claimed 32,000 lives. This news is welcome progress in our fight to combat the opioid epidemic, but of course more work remains.

I am also getting increasingly concerned with the growing use of illicit stimulants, like meth and cocaine. From 2016 to 2017, we saw a 37 percent increase in the number of Americans who died from an overdose involving psychostimulants, totaling more than 10,000 deaths. A recent study tragically placed Oregon second in the nation for methamphetamine use. Numbers like these are deeply concerning, which is why I [joined a group of bipartisan lawmakers](#) to ask the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Drug Enforcement Administration to remain on guard against the increasing use of stimulants like methamphetamine.

I also wrote an [op-ed](#) this month about the need for action and attention to the increasing use of illicit stimulants. You can read my [op-ed](#) in *The Oregonian* [here](#).



## **Rep. Walden explains investigation into pain pill manufacturers**

*Congressman Greg Walden is reactivating an investigation into three top pain pill manufacturers in the ongoing opioid crisis, his office announced, as several high-profile cases proceed through the courts in various states.*

*Walden (R- Oregon Dist. 2) is among three House GOP members who signed their names to letters sent to the companies. The letters include new questions about whether the manufacturers could have done more to slow a growing nationwide opioid epidemic and reverse the rising numbers of opioid-related deaths.*

[Click here](#) to read more from KATU and [watch my full interview](#).

## **Ways My Office Can Help**

We recently helped a constituent get her green card. She was elderly and unable to make the long trip to Portland to provide her biometrics information to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Our office was able to help her supply the necessary information without having to travel to Portland.

If you need help with any federal agency, please reach out to my office at 800-533-3303. My staff is available and ready to assist you with problems you are having with federal agencies, and my office will do everything in our power to get results for you.

That's all for this update. Remember, you can always keep in touch with me via [email](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

It is an honor to represent you in the U.S. Congress.

Best regards,

Greg Walden  
U.S. Representative  
Oregon's Second District

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**Washington, DC Office**  
2185 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515  
Phone: (202) 225-6730

**Bend Office**  
1051 NW Bond St. #400  
Bend, OR 97701  
Phone: (541) 389-4408

**La Grande Office**  
1211 Washington Avenue  
La Grande, OR 97850  
Phone: (541) 624-2400

**Medford Office**  
14 N. Central Ave. #112  
Medford, OR 97501  
Phone: (541) 776-4646

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