



# 10 ways NFL draft came into focus after free agency moves

SPORTS, 1B



# Statesman Journal

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## FARMERS AWAIT FUNDING



Most Oregon farmworkers are permanent residents of their communities, but roughly 10% of the workforce lives in employer-provided housing for at least part of the year. BRIAN HAYES/STATESMAN JOURNAL

### Housing bill includes \$5M for on-farm housing improvements

Shannon Sollitt  
Salem Statesman Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK

The \$200 million housing and homeless package awaiting Gov. Tina Kotek's signature includes \$5 million for on-farm agricultural housing.

The grant program is included in House Bill 2001, an expansive housing bill that aims to declare a housing emergency and invests millions of dollars in housing infrastructure.

The farmworker housing funds would help agricultural employers maintain housing units and improve the health and safety conditions of already-existing workforce housing.

At \$5 million, the grant program is one of the smaller

allotments in the housing bill, which also includes funding for rental assistance and eviction prevention, affordable housing development, and low-barrier shelter beds, among other things.

Approximately 400 registered agricultural housing units shelter some 10,000 farmworkers and their families per year, according to the Oregon OSHA registry. Growers say maintaining those units is expensive and existing state aid isn't enough.

A grant program could help fill the gaps. The grant program looks a lot like what growers and grower advocates asked for in former Gov. Kate Brown's agricultural housing task force.

It also responds to grower critiques about the Agricultural Workforce Housing Tax Credit, which is meant to help farmers recoup costs of housing maintenance but some growers say isn't effective.

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### Silverton fined \$42,130 for ongoing sewage violations

Tracy Loew  
Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

State environmental regulators have fined the city of Silverton \$42,130 for exceeding permitted effluent limits at its wastewater treatment facility, endangering aquatic life in Silver Creek.

The Department of Environmental Quality also cited the city, without a financial penalty, for repeatedly submitting incorrect water testing results.

Silverton discharges treated wastewater to the creek, which flows into the Pudding River, and to the Oregon Garden, where it is filtered through the garden's wetlands and used for irrigation.

The city has struggled to stay within its permit limits since at least 2006.

In February 2009, DEQ issued the city a warning letter for similar violations that occurred between July 2006 and January 2008. In 2015, DEQ fined the city \$20,800 for similar violations. That fine later was reduced to \$19,400.

DEQ issued the city another warning letter in May 2020.

Silverton City Manager Ron Chandler did not respond to the Statesman Journal's interview requests Thursday and Friday.

The city has appealed the fine, admitting to some of the violations, but denying others. It has asked DEQ to recalculate its fine.

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Silverton has been fined for exceeding permitted effluent limits at its wastewater treatment facility, endangering aquatic life in Silver Creek. BRIAN HAYES/STATESMAN JOURNAL

## Bill to allow motorcycle 'lane splitting' moves through Legislature

Dirk VanderHart  
Oregon Public Broadcasting

Oregon lawmakers are taking another crack at letting motorcyclists travel between lanes in slow or stopped traffic, two years after then-Gov. Kate Brown unexpectedly vetoed a similar bill.

Senate Bill 422 passed the 30-member Senate this past week with a 27-2 vote. It now heads to the House, where representatives in both parties have signed on as sponsors.

Under the bill, motorcyclists would be able to travel between lanes on multi-

lane highways with a speed limit of at least 50 mph, but only when traffic has slowed to 10 mph or less. Motorcyclists riding between cars could travel no more than 10 mph faster than the flow of traffic.

The idea has been pushed consistently by motorcyclists, who argue the policy can improve traffic congestion and leaves them less vulnerable to being rear-ended by inattentive drivers. As they did two years ago, the bill's proponents flooded the Senate Judiciary Committee with testimony supporting the idea.

"Perhaps one of the more dangerous situations for any on-highway motorcyclist is being caught in congested traffic, where stop-and-go vehicles, distracted and inattentive vehicle operators and environmental conditions pose an increased risk of physical contact with another vehicle or hazard," Nicholas Haris, a representative for the American Motorcyclist Association, wrote in a letter to lawmakers. "Even minor contact under such conditions can be disastrous for motorcyclists."

If the bill makes it through the Senate and receives gubernatorial approval,

Oregon would join at least four other western states in endorsing some form of the practice, which is known as lane splitting, lane sharing or lane filtering, depending on the exact details of the behavior allowed. California currently allows lane splitting under different circumstances than Oregon's proposed law, as does Montana. Utah allows a similar concept when traffic is stopped at an intersection, a law advocates argue has helped reduce deaths. A policy in Arizona took effect in September.

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