

## State gets new environmental crime reporting system

*by Bend\_Weekly\_News\_Sources*

PORTLAND, Ore. -- Attorney General John Kroger today reinforced his commitment to protecting Oregon's environment by announcing the creation of an environmental crime reporting system and urging the Legislature to authorize the creation of an Environmental Crimes Unit.

"Protecting the environment is one of my top priorities," Attorney General Kroger said.

Starting today, environmental crimes can be reported through the Oregon Department of Justice Web site. Those reports will be investigated for possible prosecution.

Kroger also urged the Legislature to give him funding to create an Environmental Crimes Unit. Most environmental crimes currently go unpunished because Oregon lacks a single state environmental crime prosecutor.

An Environmental Crimes Unit would ensure the swift and professional prosecution of the most serious toxic dumping and pollution cases in Oregon.

"John Kroger has taken strong steps to live up to his campaign promise to take on Oregon's polluters," said Andrea Durbin, Executive Director of the Oregon Environmental Council. "For the health of Oregon's citizens and our environmental legacy, we're very pleased with the direction of the Attorney General's office."

Kroger also praised the effort of the Department of Environmental Quality, which is asking the Legislature increase pollution fines that haven't been raised since the 1970s. Kroger pledged to work closely with DEQ to improve Oregon's environment.

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