

Legislators vote to crack down on meth epidemic

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Bill to strengthen scrap metal sale regulations and penalties cuts off funds for meth use and production, reduces crime against Oregon businesses

Democrats in the Oregon House Thursday voted to strengthen record keeping requirements and noncompliance penalties for scrap metal dealers in an effort to further crack down on Oregon's meth epidemic.

"Last session, we worked to take the ingredients used to make meth out of the hands of those producing this devastating drug," said State Representative Arnie Roblan (D-Coos Bay). "Now, the theft of metal, which addicts sell to finance their habits, has reached an unprecedented level. If we are serious about solving this problem, this bill is the next logical step to take."

Democrats say the bill is needed because meth users have resorted to extreme measures to steal scrap metals and metal equipment—including road signs, irrigation pipes, copper wire from construction sites, stadium bleachers, utility meters, highway guardrails, farm machinery parts and more—costing Oregon businesses and taxpayers millions each year.

“As a contractor I have been aware of the problem of metal theft like copper wire and brass fixtures from construction sites for years,” said State Representative Mike Schaufler (D-Happy Valley). “But the problem has reached a whole new level. This is another tool in the tool box in our fight against meth.”

House Bill 3026 calls for scrap metal recyclers to maintain a metal purchase record for every sale that includes a useful description of the metal load, a copy of a valid driver’s license of the person selling the scrap metal and a video surveillance record. Metal recyclers who knowingly accept stolen material will be required to pay stiff penalties.

“This bill is an example of the work we can do when a broad group of people get in a room and work to find a solution to a tough problem,” said State Representative Brian Clem (D-Salem). “It’s the kind of work we should do more of in the legislature.”

The bill has the support of the construction industry, utilities, agriculture, law enforcement, metal recyclers and local governments.

“The meth epidemic is costing us all,” said State Representative Debby Boone (D-Cannon Beach). “Today’s vote is a win/win/win—it’s good for business, good for taxpayers and tough on crime.”

Legislators vote to crack down on meth epidemic by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources