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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE: January 8, 2007

SENATE APPROVES HISTORIC NEW LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR

SALEM—Based on a recommendation by the blue-ribbon Public Commission on the Oregon Legislature, the Oregon Senate today by a 23-7 vote approved a resolution setting a June 29 cut-off date for this year's regular session and creating a 20-day special session next year.

The 29-member Public Commission, appointed by Senate President Peter Courtney and former House Speaker Karen Minnis (R-Wood Village), spent 14 months analyzing issues and taking public testimony on issues surrounding legislative procedures. Last April, it recommended the Legislature experiment with session timing and structure to improve its ability to make policies, adopt budgets and oversee state agencies.

Senate President Peter Courtney (D-Salem/Gervais/Woodburn) said the new schedule will help the Legislature better meet the public's needs.

"When Oregon became a state in 1859, the population was just 52,465 and the state budget was just \$72,545," said Courtney. "Today, about 3.6 million people live here and the Governor's proposed budget for 2007-09 is \$49.2 billion. The legislative structure put into place in the 1800s does not meet the budget and policy needs of today's Oregonians. This new schedule gives us an opportunity to blaze a new trail."

House Speaker Jeff Merkley (D-Portland) said, "Many people have worked very hard on this plan. The House will take it up right away."

The resolution the Senate passed today sets the following legislative schedule:

- January 15-March 2: Senate and House hold floor sessions once or more weekly.
- January 29: Last day for legislators to request bills from Legislative Counsel.
- February 26: Last day for legislators to introduce bills.
- March 5: Senate and House begin daily floor sessions.

- April 30: Last day for Senate committees to work Senate bills and House committees to work House bills (does not apply to any joint committee, Senate Finance and Revenue Committee, Senate Rules Committee, House Revenue Committee, and House Elections, Ethics and Rules Committee).
- May 31: Last day for Senate and House committees to work bills (does not apply to Joint Ways and Means, Senate Finance and Revenue Committee, Senate Rules Committee, House Revenue Committee, and House Elections, Ethics and Rules Committee).
- June 29: Session adjourns.
- January 2008: Senate President and House Speaker petition legislators calling for a Special Session.
- February 4, 2008: First day of special session.
- February 29, 2008: Last day of special session.

It will require a two-thirds vote of the Senate to deviate from these deadlines.

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