

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: No fiscal impact

Action:	Do Pass as Amended and Be Printed Engrossed and Rescind the Subsequent Referral to the Committee on Ways and Means
Vote:	6 - 0 - 1
Yeas:	Boquist, Clem, Dingfelder, Macpherson, Smith P., Roblan
Nays:	0
Exc.:	Maurer
Prepared By:	Beth Patrino, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	2/22, 4/19

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Establishes the Stewardship Agreement Grant Fund to provide grants to carry out the purposes of stewardship agreements described in ORS 541.423. Requires grants awarded by the Board of Forestry to have matching funds, in-kind services or other investments in the project and provide a public benefit through improved water quality or improved fish or wildlife habitat. Permits the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board to use the Flexible Incentives Account to fund activities to achieve the purposes of stewardship agreements. Permits the Departments of Agriculture and Forestry to determine applicability of rules to particular landowner as part of a stewardship agreement. Permits Department of Agriculture and Forestry to determine consistency of activities under stewardship agreement with Safe Harbor Agreements or Candidate Conservation Agreements between the State of Oregon and the federal government under the federal Endangered Species Act. Exempts land management plans of stewardship agreements from disclosure as public record unless the public interest requires disclosure in a particular instance.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Incentives to enter into stewardship agreements
- Reductions in federal cost-share programs
- Regulatory certainty provisions
- Public records exemption for stewardship plans

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: Deletes provisions related to the Watershed Improvement Grant Fund. Revised language related to an agency applying laws or rules adopted after a stewardship agreement is signed. Adds land management plans to list of public records exempt from disclosure unless public interest requires disclosure.

BACKGROUND: The Forest Stewardship Program was established to encourage landowners to exceed regulatory requirements in order to conserve, restore and improve water quality or fish and wildlife habitat. A forest stewardship plan defines a landowner's objectives, describes the current condition of natural resources on the property, and outlines a ten-year action plan to achieve the landowner's objectives while maintaining and enhancing the resources that are present. All actions to achieve a stewardship plan are voluntary.

HB 2114-A adds incentives to encourage participation in the program. The bill establishes a Stewardship Agreement Grant Fund and specifies that monies from the Flexible Incentives Account may be used to fund stewardship agreement activities. The bill also authorizes the Department of Agriculture and the State Board of Forestry to, individually or jointly, make a determination on the applicability of rules to a landowner with a stewardship plan. Landowners may be required to comply with later-adopted regulations upon a clear showing of significant threat to the public health or welfare, fish and wildlife habitat or water quality.

4/27/2007 10:27:00 AM

This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.