

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: No fiscal impact

Action: Do Pass as Amended and Be Printed Engrossed
Vote: 5 - 0 - 0
Yeas: Deckert, George L., Monnes Anderson, Starr, Metsger
Nays: 0
Exc.: 0
Prepared By: Janet Adkins, Administrator
Meeting Dates: 1/18, 2/15

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Requires operators of public use airports in Oregon to notify the Oregon Department of Aviation 120 days prior to permanent closure of the airport.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Importance of entire airport network
- Effect of airport closures
- Airport closures nationwide
- Whether enforcement provisions are advisable
- Survey of public-use airport operators supporting measure

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: Clarifies that the measure does not apply to temporary closures and reduces the notice required from 180 days to 120 days.

BACKGROUND: Oregon's airport network consists of 97 public-use airports, ranging in size from the Portland International Airport to the Alkali Lake State Airport. By means of this network, the aviation industry serves multiple essential activities including agriculture, fire suppression, emergency medical transportation, search and rescue, mail service, and military exercises, as well as recreation, tourism, and business travel. Because Oregon is a large state in terms of land area, maintaining these airports is vital to the aviation network, providing regular and emergency landing and fueling areas for those flying within or through the state. As demand for large areas of land grows, the pressure on airport owners to sell or convert the land to other uses increases. The Oregon Department of Aviation testified that across the country airports are closing at the rate of about one a week.

Notice of a pending closure, as required by SB 139-A, would give the Oregon Aviation Department time to work with the operator and owner to determine if the closure can be avoided. It would also allow timely notification of a closure to pilots and airport-based businesses.

Of the 97 public-use airports in Oregon: 15 are privately owned, 28 are state owned, and the remainder are owned by cities (30), counties (9), port districts (11), airport districts (1), or the federal government (2). Seven of these airports have scheduled commercial air service. Another approximately 350 private-use airports are located in the state and would not be affected by the bill.