

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Fiscal statement issued

Action: Do Pass
Vote: 4 - 1 - 0
Yeas: Atkinson, Bates, Prozanski, Avakian
Nays: Beyer
Exc.: 0
Prepared By: Sue Marshall, Administrator
Meeting Dates: 4/5

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Creates a 12-member Environmental Justice Task Force, to be appointed by the Governor. Specifies duties and responsibilities. Requires natural resource agencies to perform certain actions related to environmental justice. Defines “natural resource agency.”

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Whether there is a need to institutionalize an environmental justice task force
- Under-representation of low-income and minority groups in policy decisions
- Disproportionate health risk to low-income and minority communities

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: Environmental justice issues have generally been defined to include problems that have a disproportionately negative impact on minority and low-income communities. During the past 15 years, limited-duration advisory committees on environmental justice issues were created by Governor Barbara Roberts and Governor John Kitzhaber. The Department of Environmental Quality and Oregon Health Division have also examined these issues.

Senate Bill 420 creates a 12-member Environmental Justice Task Force, to be appointed by the Governor and supported through the Governor’s Office. The measure directs state agencies to report annually to the task force. State agencies will assist in the task force’s work, including taking steps to ensure that those persons affected by natural resource agencies’ decisions are have a direct voice in those decisions. The duties of the Environmental Justice Task Force include submission of an annual report to the Governor that identifies environmental justice concerns and the progress of state agencies toward achieving the goals established by the task force.