

REVENUE: No revenue impact
FISCAL: Fiscal statement issued

Action:	Do Pass as Amended, Be Printed Engrossed, and Rescind the Subsequent Referral to the Committee on Ways and Means
Vote:	6 - 0 - 1
Yeas:	Holvey, Huffman, Lim, Riley, Sprenger, Witt
Nays:	0
Exc.:	Barnhart
Prepared By:	Patrick Brennan, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	2/6, 2/11

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Authorizes the Governor to waive the one-week waiting period for payment of Unemployment Insurance benefits, following the declaration of an emergency, to individuals residing within affected disaster areas. Makes authorization contingent upon federal law changes to allow waiver without penalty.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Oregon's status as an extended unemployment benefits state
- Impact of lost income on storm victims

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: Removes emergency clause. Deletes allocation of \$121,500 to Employment Department for retroactive payments related to December 2007 storm event. Stipulates that authority to waive one-week waiting period is inactive pending federal rule changes.

BACKGROUND: Unemployment Insurance (UI) provides workers with income in cases where they find themselves without work, even temporarily. However, current law requires a one-week waiting period following loss of employment before an individual may qualify to receive unemployment benefits.

Following the December 2007 storm that devastated several communities in northwest Oregon, many residents of those communities whose places of business were affected by the storm found themselves out of work temporarily. Some of those individuals were ineligible to receive federal disaster UI, as they were eligible for state unemployment at the time of the event, and were also ineligible to qualify for state UI due to the one-week waiting period requirement. Many people who badly needed money to help recover from the disaster found themselves with no way to make up for the lost wages.

House Bill 3606-A provides the Governor with the statutory authority to waive the one-week waiting period for qualifying for UI benefits for individuals living in the affected area following a disaster declaration. However, because such a waiver would currently cause Oregon to incur a federal penalty for early payment of UI benefits, the measure stipulates that the Governor's authority to waive the waiting period is inactive until such time as the federal government provides authorization to do so without incurring the penalty.