

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Fiscal statement issued

Action:	Do Pass as Amended and Be Printed Engrossed and Be Referred to the Committee on Ways and Means by prior reference
Vote:	5 - 0 - 0
Yeas:	Atkinson, Boquist, Hass, Prozanski, Dingfelder
Nays:	0
Exc.:	0
Prepared By:	Beth Herzog, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	3/10, 3/19

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Requires the State Department of Agriculture (Department) to establish a grant program for assisting counties in carrying out weed control district duties, functions, and powers. Authorizes the Department to adopt rules to carry out the grant program. Requires that in order to qualify for grant funds a county must have established a weed control district, provided county money in an amount that is equal to or more than the grant money, and have complied with the Department's rules. Requires that projects that restore, enhance, or protect water quality, watersheds and riparian habitats be given priority when allocating grant funding. Requires that counties report back to the Department on the use of grant funds.

Declares an emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Potential funding sources
- Overlap between Soil and Water Conservation Districts and County Weed Boards
- Grant program could be a way to encourage counties to establish weed control districts

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: Removes the funding structure for the grant program.

BACKGROUND: Noxious weeds have become thoroughly established and are spreading on private, state, county, and federally owned lands. The Noxious Weed Control Program exists within the Plant Division of the Department of Agriculture (Department). The program operates to fulfill part of the Department's mission to protect Oregon's agricultural industry and natural resources by preventing and limiting the spread and impact of noxious weeds which displace and compete with native and desirable domestic plant species. The Department administers the Oregon State Weed Board (OSWB) grant program. These grants are available to any person, tribe, watershed council, soil and water conservation district, community college, state institution of higher education, independent not-for-profit institution of higher education or political subdivision of this state. OSWB grants are restricted to projects that restore, enhance or protect fish and wildlife habitat, watershed functions, native salmonid populations or water quality. In addition, the OSWB grant money must be used for on the ground weed control projects.