

FISCAL IMPACT OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION**Measure: SB 566**Seventy-Seventh Oregon Legislative Assembly – 2013 Regular Session
Legislative Fiscal Office***Only Impacts on Original or Engrossed
Versions are Considered Official***

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Measure Description:

Directs State Medical Examiner to assume counties' responsibilities related to death investigations.

Government Unit(s) Affected:

Oregon State Police (OSP), Counties

Summary of Expenditure Impact: See Analysis

Local Government Mandate:

This bill does not affect local governments' service levels or shared revenues sufficient to trigger Section 15, Article XI of the Oregon Constitution.

Analysis:

The Legislative Fiscal Office (LFO) believes this measure warrants a subsequent referral to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means for consideration of this measure's potential budgetary impact.

The measure requires the State Medical Examiner to establish regions in the state for administration of medical examiner duties, and to determine for each region, whether the counties would continue administrative duties or if the State Medical Examiner would be responsible. The measure allows the State Medical Examiner to appoint a Deputy State Medical Examiner for each region that is administered by the State Medical Examiner and other deputy examiners as necessary. The measure is operative January 1, 2014 and allows the State Medical Examiner and Oregon State Police (OSP) to take action before that date. Currently, the Oregon State Medical Examiner's Office comprises 9.00 FTE and provides general supervision and support to local County Medical Examiners while funding for the investigations comes from the county.

OSP assumes that the State Medical Examiner would be responsible for the administrative duties for all counties within the established regions and that the administrative duties over the regions and counties would phase-in over the next two biennia. OSP anticipates creating four regions; first establishing a Southern Oregon region to become operative July 1, 2014, followed by a Central/Eastern Oregon region operative January 2015. The last two regions covering the Willamette Valley region and the Northwest Oregon region would be phased in during the 2015-2017 biennium.

OSP anticipates the need for a Deputy State Medical Examiner for each region along with forensic pathologists, Medicolegal Death Investigators for scene investigations and field work, and support staff. OSP estimates establishing 23 positions with associated services and supplies and transportation budgets at a total cost of \$2,535,819 General Fund in 2013-15.

OSP notes that a regional office facility does not currently exist for the Central/Eastern Oregon or Willamette Valley regions. Initial facility cost estimates provided by OSP for the Central/Eastern Oregon region include \$37,500 in 2013-15 and \$100,000 in 2015-17 for leasing space at the St. Charles Hospital in Bend. The potential recruitment of specialized staffing needed to establish the different regions and the ability to establish proper facilities will impact the implementation timeline proposed in the fiscal impact statement.