

REVENUE: Revenue statement issued

FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact, no statement issued

Action: Do Pass the A-Engrossed Measure
Vote: 6 - 0 - 0
Yeas: Edwards, Girod, Monroe, Starr, Thomsen, Beyer
Nays: 0
Exc.: 0
Prepared By: Patrick Brennan, Administrator
Meeting Dates: 5/6, 5/14

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Modifies circumstances under which additional moneys can be collected from residential electricity customers under public purpose charge expenditure standard. Extends sunset on collection of moneys. Requires Director of Department of Housing and Community Services appoint advisory committee on low-income electric bill payment assistance funding to determine which agency or entity to transfer duties, functions and powers of Housing and Community Services Department relating to collection of additional moneys for low-income electric bill payment assistance. Sunsets advisory committee at convening of 2014 regular session of Legislative Assembly. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Many households struggle with paying electric bill
- Purpose of advisory committee created by measure
- Effect of federal sequestration on program
- Whether assistance program should be temporary or permanent

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: The Oregon Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is federally funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and is designed to help low-income households with home heating costs. To be eligible to receive assistance, a household's income must be at or below 60 percent of Oregon's median income, based on household income and house hold size. Recipients must also have documented energy costs. The program in Oregon is administered by the Department of Housing and Community Services (OHCS).

Senate Bill 863 (2011) directed the Public Utility Commission to collect an additional \$5 million per year for the low-income bill payment assistance program in the event that two or more of the following criteria were met as of January 1, 2014: state unemployment exceeded 10 percent for at least six months of the previous 12-month period, Oregon's poverty rate exceeded 12 percent during the previous 12-month period, federal allocation of low-income energy assistance was 75 percent or less than the previous year's allocation, or more than 20 percent of Oregon households received supplemental nutrition assistance during the previous 12-month period.

House Bill 2004-A removes the economic triggers for the collection of the \$5 million additional moneys for the LIHEAP program and instead provides the OHCS Director with authority to request the increase. The measure also directs that an advisory committee be appointed for the purpose of determining to which agency the low-income energy assistance program should be transferred. The advisory committee is to present its findings to the appropriate interim legislative committees no later than December 1, 2013.

5/17/2013 9:42:00 AM

This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.