

Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Carrier – House: Rep. Hanna
Carrier – Senate: Sen. Edwards

Revenue: No revenue impact

Fiscal: Fiscal statement issued

Action: Do Pass the A-Engrossed Measure

Vote: 25 – 0 – 1

House

Yeas: Barker, Buckley, Frederick, Freeman, Huffman, Jenson, Komp, McLane, Nathanson, Read, Richardson, Smith, Tomei, Williamson

Nays:

Exc: Hanna

Senate

Yeas: Bates, Devlin, Edwards, Girod, Hansell, Johnson, Monroe, Steiner Hayward, Thomsen, Whitsett, Winters

Nays:

Exc:

Prepared By: Linda Gilbert, Legislative Fiscal Office

Meeting Date: June 21, 2013

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Adds to permissible uses of money in Oregon Forest Land Protection Fund (Fund): emergency fire insurance policy premiums; availability and mobilization of emergency fire suppression resources on statewide basis; and paying for non-routine supplemental fire prevention, detection or suppression. Changes limits on annual expenditures from Fund. Authorizes State Forester to prepare budget request for forest protection districts that includes mitigating forest patrol assessment rates where land productivity or other economic factors seriously limit ability of landowners to provide adequate protection against fire during fire season. Phases in changes in factors used to calculate annual expenditures. Declares emergency, effective July 1, 2013.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Bill reduces general exposure to General Fund due to extreme fire costs
- Upfront investments in this bill are projected to save costs in the long run
- Western Oregon off-set of assessments for the Eastern part of the State

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: The Oregon Department of Forestry protects approximately 16 million acres (24,900 square miles) of private and public forestland from fire. Protected lands are primarily private, but also include state and other non-federal public land and, by contract, United States Bureau of Land Management forests in western Oregon. This is more than half of the total forest land in Oregon. Essential elements of the department's fire protection program include planning, prevention, detection, initial attack, and smoke and fuels management. Landowners and the state share fire protection costs.

The Oregon Forest Land Protection Fund (OFLPF) is used to equalize firefighting costs across the state and supports the purchase of insurance to protect Oregon against disastrous fire costs. Currently, basic fire protection funding is evenly shared by landowners and the General Fund; in practice, landowners have paid a greater share of actual costs. House Bill 2050 A would make changes to the OFLPF to increase funding for acquisition of equipment to reduce the size and severity of fires, improve fire protection affordability on the eastside and move toward a 50/50 funding model over the next six years.