

PRELIMINARY STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**CARRIER:**

House Committee on Rural Communities, Land Use, & Water

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, statement not yet issued**FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, statement not yet issued****SUBSEQUENT REFERRAL TO: None****Action:****Vote:****Yeas:****Nays:****Exc.:****Prepared By:** Ian Davidson, Administrator**Meeting Dates:** 02/19

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Establishes Task Force on the Columbia River Gorge Commission. Assigns duties of task force. Details composition of task force. Makes operation of requirement to establish task force contingent on Washington legislature authorizing correspondent task force to assist in carrying out duties. Requires task force to report to interim committees on environment and natural resources on or before September 15, 2016. Sunsets on December 31, 2016. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:**EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:**

BACKGROUND: Passed into law in 1986, the Columbia River National Scenic Area Act called for the creation of the Columbia River Gorge Commission (Gorge Commission). The Gorge Commission has 13 members: three appointed by each of the governors of Oregon and Washington, one appointed by each of the six Gorge counties, and one (non-voting) representative from the U.S. Forest Service. The Gorge Commission works in partnership with the United States Forest Service, the States of Oregon and Washington, four Native American Treaty Tribes, and the six counties within the Scenic Area. The Gorge commission oversees land-use and policy in the six Gorge counties. Its duties include protecting natural resources and fostering economic development in the region.

House Bill 2039 would establish a Task Force on the Columbia River Gorge Commission. However, the creation of the Task Force is contingent on the Washington legislature authorizing a correspondent task force to assist in carrying out duties. House Bill 2039, which would sunset on December 31, 2016, would require the task force to report to interim committees on environment and natural resources on or before September 15, 2016.