

PRELIMINARY STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**CARRIER:**

Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

REVENUE: No revenue impact (-1)**FISCAL: Fiscal statement issued (-1)****Subsequent Referral:****NEEDS SUB REF TO JWM****Action:****Vote:****Yeas:****Nays:****Exc.:****Prepared By:** Dan Roper, Administrator**Meeting Dates:** 4/13

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Establishes Working Forests and Farms Advisory Committee in office of Governor. Requires committee to (1) provide advice to Oregon Business Development Department (Business Oregon) and Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) to assist development of rules for loans, insurance, financing, and grants relating to working forests and farms, (2) adopt policy and priority recommendations in evaluating conservation benefits for working forests and farms, and (3) consult Business Oregon and OWEB regarding merits of specific applications made under sections of this Act.

Requires Business Oregon to establish program to provide financial institutions or other lenders with loan guarantees from Working Forest and Farm Credit Enhancement Fund for existing or new working forest or farm under certain conditions. Requires Business Oregon to establish program to provide fixed-rate financing from Working Forest and Farm Revolving Loan Fund for acquisition of working forests and farms under certain conditions. Requires OWEB to establish program to provide grants from Working Farm and Forest Conservation Fund for maintaining or acquiring working forests and farms on which a portion of property is dedicated to providing conservation benefits.

Establishes Working Forest and Farm Credit Enhancement Fund, Working Forest and Farm Revolving Loan Fund, and Working Farm and Forest Conservation Fund.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: (Proposed -1 Amendment) Establishes Task Force on Working Farms and Forests. Requires task force to (1) study rates of conversion of working farms and forests to other uses, (2) study conflicts between working farms and forests and other uses, (3) study and evaluate potential tools for state government to help private landowners maintain land as working farms and forests while achieving conservation benefits, (4) study issues regarding compatibility of conservation actions and production operations, and (5) identify future challenges.

Establishes Clean Water Fund. Authorizes Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board to expend moneys from fund for purchasing long-term agreements to manage riparian areas on working farms for water quality improvement and funding capital improvements to working farms in association with such agreements. Declares emergency, effective upon passage.

BACKGROUND: The Oregon Business Development Department is a state-agency whose mission is to create, retain, expand and attract businesses that provide sustainable, living-wage jobs for Oregonians through public-private partnerships, leveraged funding and support of economic opportunities for Oregon companies and entrepreneurs.

4/13/2015 11:20:00 AM *

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

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board is a state agency that provides grants to help Oregonians take care of local streams, rivers, wetlands and natural areas. OWEB grants are funded from the Oregon Lottery, federal dollars, and salmon license plate revenue.