

REVENUE:

FISCAL:

SUBSEQUENT REFERRAL TO:

Action:

Vote:

Yeas:

Nays:

Exc.:

Prepared By: James LaBar, Administrator

Meeting Dates: 4/8, 4/20

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Places limitation on state liability for non-property claims applicable to State Fair Council (Council). Exempts Council from certain statutory provisions regarding the State Commission for the Blind. Increases number of available seats on the Council from seven to eleven to nine to thirteen. Provides for appointment of additional member of Legislative Assembly to be nonvoting observer and advisor to Council.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

(-1 amendment) Removes exemption for State Fair Council regarding vending program.

BACKGROUND: The Oregon State Fair began in 1858 as an agricultural exhibition and expanded in 1977 to include an exposition center. In 1981, the Legislative Assembly directed the Oregon State Fair and Exposition Center (Fair) to become financially self-supporting and removed General Fund support. In 1986, the Legislative Assembly authorized the Fair to sell up to \$10 million in revenue bonds to renovate the horse stadium, build a new livestock pavilion, and construct an outdoor amphitheater. The Fair, however, was unable to generate sufficient revenue to meet both operating and maintenance costs. In 1997, the Legislative Assembly directed the Joint Legislative Audit Committee to evaluate and identify solutions to the Fair's problems.

In 2005, House Bill 3502 shifted management of the Fair to Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (ORPD) in order to curb the Fair's reliance on the state's General Fund. ORPD has proposed that the Fair and exposition center would benefit from a new governance structure. Senate Bill 7 (2013) provided for the establishment of the Council as a public corporation to conduct and oversee the Fair and exposition center and associated operations.

Senate Bill 934 is a clean-up measure addressing the Council so that the public corporation is on better footing for the future. The liability changes in Section One put the Council under the same liability provisions as OHSU, the only other comparable public corporation in the state. The changes will resolve questions in the insurance market. The increased number of available seats on the Council offers a good opportunity to enhance public support and endorsement of the Fair. The additional seats also will allow for more diverse and broad-based policy setting board.