

FISCAL IMPACT OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

Measure: HB 2931 - 5 &

Seventy-Eighth Oregon Legislative Assembly – 2015 Regular Session
Legislative Fiscal Office

*Only Impacts on Original or Engrossed
Versions are Considered Official*

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Measure Description:

Directs Oregon Health Authority to disseminate to school districts information related to elevated levels of radon.

Government Unit(s) Affected:

Department of Education, Oregon Health Authority (OHA), School Districts

Local Government Mandate:

This does not affect local governments' service levels or shared revenues sufficient to trigger Section 15, Article XI of the Oregon Constitution.

Analysis:

House Bill 2931 requires the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to disseminate information related to elevated levels of radon to each school district in Oregon. The bill specifies what type of information must be disseminated. If requested by OHA, the State Board of Education must assist OHA in disseminating the information. The bill requires each school district to develop a plan for testing schools for elevated levels of radon. OHA must develop a model plan for school districts to follow. OHA must seek input of the Oregon School Boards Association in developing this model plan. The bill specifies minimum standards for this plan, including providing for testing of radon in schools at least once every 10 years. Results of these tests must be made available to district school boards, OHA, and the school community. School districts must submit their plan to OHA by September 1, 2016. These plans must require initial testing of schools for elevated levels of radon by January 1, 2021; this requirement does not apply to schools that have been tested for elevated levels of radon on or after January 1, 2006. The bill contains an emergency clause, and is effective on passage.

Oregon Health Authority (OHA)

OHA estimates the fiscal impact of disseminating information and working with the Oregon Department of Education, and the Oregon School Boards Association to develop a model radon testing plan for school districts to be \$55,946 General Fund. Currently the Health Homes and Schools Program in the Oregon Public Health Division Office of Environmental Public health receives a small amount of money from federal grants to employ one half-time Radon Program Coordinator. OHA anticipates using this position to carry out the work required by this bill.

Oregon Department of Education (ODE) and School Districts

ODE estimates the cost of working with OHA to disseminate information about radon to school districts to be \$27,462 General Fund. The bill requires ODE to assist OHA and to make payments to school districts for the development of a radon testing plan. The Oregon Department of Education assumes that OHA will assist ODE in developing the distribution formula.

If this bill passes, school districts will need to develop a plan for testing schools for elevated levels of radon using the model plan developed by OHA, and submit this plan to the OHA by September 1, 2016.

The Legislative Fiscal Office notes that although the fiscal impact of this bill is anticipated to be minimal to OHA and ODE, this is because the bill only directs OHA, ODE, and school districts to develop a plan for radon testing. The school districts have six years to conduct the first test (the bill specifies that initial testing must be carried out by January 1, 2021). Therefore this fiscal impact analysis does not include the full cost of actually conducting radon testing for every district, only the cost of the development of the plan.

In addition, this fiscal analysis does not include mitigation costs if radon is found. This fiscal assumes that the plan to be developed by OHA, the Department of Education, and school districts will address implementation issues such as:

- Whether the testing will be done in-house by existing staff in each school, or if the testing will be contracted to certified radon testers;
- The number and types of rooms that will be tested in each school;
- The timeline for testing;
- Data collection, interpreting results, quality control, data reporting, and follow-up requirements – including procedures for mitigation if radon gas is found;
- The cost of conducting radon testing and making the result available to the school community; and
- How these expenses will be funded.

As a point of reference for the cost of actually conducting radon tests and installing mitigation systems, the following are rough estimates from risk/facilities managers from a sample of school districts currently carrying out radon testing:.

- Tigard Tualatin = \$25,000-27,000;
- Portland Public Schools = \$100,000 to conduct testing in 3,200 spaces at 101 campuses;
- Beaverton = \$150,000 to conduct testing in 2,900 spaces at 51 schools.
- Salem Keizer = \$100,000 to conduct testing in 65 schools;

In addition, Salem Keizer reports that the district had been testing for radon according to EPA guidelines every 10 years. In 2010, the district spent \$65,033 for mitigation systems that needed to be installed in 5 of the 65 schools. The districts estimate an annual cost ranging from \$4,000 to \$10,000 to maintain these mitigation systems.