

Seventy-Eighth Oregon Legislative Assembly - 2015 Regular Session
STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY
Senate Committee On Business and Transportation

MEASURE: SB 32
CARRIER: Sen. Beyer

Fiscal: No Fiscal Impact
Revenue: No Revenue Impact

Action Date: 02/25/15

Action: Do Pass.

Meeting Dates: 02/25, 02/16

Vote:

Yeas: 4 - Beyer, Girod, Monroe, Riley

Nays: 1 - Thomsen

Prepared By: James LaBar, Committee Administrator

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Public Utility Commission to form work group to study methods by which natural gas public utility may expand service to areas that do not currently have access to natural gas. Requires Commission to report study results to interim committee of Legislative Assembly related to energy by September 15, 2016. Sunsets on January 2, 2017. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Importance of work groups to examine issues
- Cost to Commission for work groups
- Portions of rural Oregon
- Economic Development
- Propane usage

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Energy is often a key ingredient in a business's decision to locate or expand in a community. A number of smaller communities in Oregon do not have natural gas service or, if they have natural gas service, the site where a business wants to build is located a considerable distance from existing infrastructure. As a result, the community in question may be dropped from consideration by the business. Some communities without natural gas have asked that natural gas service be extended to their communities. There is a considerable cost involved and, as a result, very few new communities have received service.

Senate Bill 32 directs the Public Utility Commission to form a work group to explore ways of getting natural gas to unserved communities. The primary issue is cost and how to pay for getting the infrastructure to a community or to an industrial site.