

Fiscal: No Fiscal Impact

Revenue: No Revenue Impact

Action Date: 06/02/15

Action: Do Pass.

Meeting Dates: 05/21, 06/02

Vote:

Yeas: 9 - Bentz, Boone, Heard, Helm, Holvey, Johnson, Reardon, Vega Pederson, Weidner

Prepared By: Beth Patrino, Committee Administrator

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Department of Environmental Quality to solicit independent scientific and technical input and provide adequate public notice, opportunity for public comment and informational overview before Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) on draft assessment methodologies when developing or selecting among methodologies to assess state waters under federal Water Pollution Control Act and prior to publishing draft water body assessments based on such methodologies. Requires EQC to provide public comment opportunity on draft assessment methodologies during EQC meeting at which informational overview takes place.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Current process for selection of assessment methodologies
- Types of water quality standards
- Opportunity for additional scientific and public input

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act) requires states to adopt water quality standards designating beneficial uses of the state's waters and setting criteria designed to protect those uses. States submit their standards to the federal Environmental Protection Agency for approval. In Oregon, the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) applies water quality standards to assess whether the quality of Oregon's rivers and lakes is adequate for fish and other aquatic life, recreation, drinking, agriculture, industry and other uses. DEQ also uses the standards as a regulatory tool to prevent pollution of the state's waters.

Senate Bill 829A would require DEQ to take certain actions when developing or selecting among methodologies to assess the state's waters pursuant to sections 303(d) and 305(b) of the federal Clean Water Act.