

STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact

Revenue: No Revenue Impact

Action Date: 06/24/15

Action: Do Pass.

Meeting Dates: 06/24

Vote:

House

Yeas: 11 - Buckley, Gomberg, Huffman, Komp, McLane, Nathanson, Read, Smith, Whisnant, Whitsett, Williamson

Exc: 1 - Rayfield

Senate

Yeas: 11 - Burdick, Devlin, Girod, Hansell, Johnson, Monroe, Roblan, Shields, Steiner Hayward, Whitsett, Winters

Nays: 1 - Thomsen

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WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Public Utility Commission (PUC) 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. Directs PUC to include in work group representatives of public utilities that furnish natural gas, other energy suppliers, local governments, and elected officials; stakeholders who have interest in study outcome; and individuals with subject matter knowledge.

Requires PUC 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:

- Fiscal provisions of the measure

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Energy is often a key ingredient in a decision to locate or expand a business in a community. A number of smaller communities in Oregon do not have natural gas service or, if they have service, the site where a business wants to build is located a considerable distance from existing infrastructure. Some communities without natural gas service have asked that 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 would direct the Public Utility Commission to form a work group to explore ways of extending natural gas service.