

**STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY****House Committee On Rural Communities, Land Use and Water****Fiscal:** Fiscal impact issued**Revenue:** No Revenue Impact**Action Date:** 02/03/16**Action:** Do Pass With Amendments And Be Referred To Ways And Means By Prior Reference. (Printed A-Eng.)**Meeting Dates:** 02/03**Vote:**

Yeas: 7 - Clem, Gilliam, Gomberg, Helm, McLane, Post, Witt

**Prepared By:** Beth Reiley, Committee Administrator**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Establishes 11-15 member, non-legislative Task Force on Drought Emergency Response (Task Force). Requires Task Force to research and evaluate potential tools to prepare for or deal with drought emergencies. Task Force activities may include, but are not limited to: 1) evaluating sufficiency of existing tools to address short-term drought response and recommending additional tools; 2) identifying options to minimize drought impacts on agriculture, municipal, other interests and fish and wildlife; 3) identifying tools to assist small water providers in developing water management conservation or efficiency plans and anticipating drought risks and responses; 4) identifying data and resources necessary for anticipating drought and drought impacts; or 5) recommending improvements in information sharing. Requires Task Force to report to interim committee related to natural resources no later than November 1, 2016. Requires Water Resources Department to provide staff support. Sunsets Task Force on December 31, 2016. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- Review and opportunity to evaluate drought response tools is timely given nature of 2015 drought
- Importance of long term drought planning
- Need for regional solutions
- Effects of drought on agriculture, communities, fish, wildlife, and recreation

**EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:**

Broadens role of person appointed to Task Force on Drought Emergency Response (Task Force) to represent agriculture, rather than irrigated agriculture. Clarifies Task Force members appointed by Governor must be from geographically diverse areas.

**BACKGROUND:**

In 2015, Oregon experienced severe-to-extreme drought across the entire state. Twenty-five counties received a drought declaration, more than any other year since 1992, when a statewide declaration was issued. The impacts of droughts are slow-moving and may persist long after rain and snowfall returns. The January 26, 2016, U.S. Drought Monitor showed that 74 percent of the state continues to experience moderate-to-extreme drought. These conditions persist despite above-normal snowpack and above-normal precipitation.

House Bill 4113A would establish an 11 to 15 member Task Force on Drought Emergency Response charged with researching and evaluating potential tools to prepare for or deal with drought emergencies.