

78th Oregon Legislative Assembly - 2016 Regular Session
STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY
House Committee On Agriculture and Natural Resources

MEASURE: HB 4140
CARRIER: Rep. Gomberg

Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact

Revenue: No Revenue Impact

Action Date: 02/09/16

Action: Do Pass.

Meeting Dates: 02/04, 02/09

Vote:

Yeas: 9 - Barreto, Esquivel, Frederick, Gorsek, Krieger, McKeown, McLain, Whitsett, Witt

Prepared By: Dan Roper, Committee Administrator

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Prohibits release of sky lantern into airspace of Oregon. Makes offense Class A violation subject to maximum penalty of \$2,000 fine and authorizes certain employees of state to issue citations.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Fire danger posed by release of sky lanterns into Oregon's airspace
- Severity of fire season in 2015
- Description of how sky lanterns work and unintended consequences of release

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Sky lanterns, also referred to as UFO balloons, mini hot air balloons, Khoom Fay, wish lanterns, and Kongming Lanterns, are small hot air balloons made of paper, with an opening at the bottom where a small fire is suspended. When lit, the flame heats the air inside the lantern, thus lowering its density and causing the lantern to rise into the air. The sky lantern is usually only airborne for as long as the flame stays alight, after which the lantern sinks back to the ground.

Currently, these unmanned free-floating devices which contain an open flame or other heat source are regulated under Sections 305 and 308 of the Oregon Fire Code and are prohibited from being released where they can cause an unwanted fire.

House Bill 4140 would prohibit the release of sky lanterns into Oregon's airspace and allow certain state employees to issue citations.