

STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**Senate Committee On Environment and Natural Resources****Fiscal:** Fiscal impact issued**Revenue:** No Revenue Impact**Action Date:** 02/11/16**Action:** Do Pass With Amendments. Refer To Ways And Means By Prior Reference.
(Printed A-Eng).**Meeting Dates:** 02/11**Vote:**

Yeas: 4 - Dembrow, Edwards, Olsen, Whitsett

Exc: 1 - Prozanski

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

Requires Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to award grants for developing and administering low-interest loan program for repair, replacement, upgrade or evaluation of residential or small business on-site septic systems. Appropriates \$250,000 for biennium beginning July 1, 2015 to DEQ to administer program and award grants. Requires recipient of grant funds to enter into agreement that includes certain provisions. Requires funds to be used to connect to sewer and decommission on-site septic system if recipient is located within territory of available sewer and connection is cost-effective option. Requires recipient to provide mechanism for ensuring compliance with locally required operation and maintenance. Establishes preferences for awarding grants. Requires DEQ to submit report to interim committees of the Legislature related to natural resources no later than September 15, 2016. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Water quality issues resulting from failing septic systems
- Importance of regular maintenance on septic systems
- Ability for homeowner to choose appropriate solution

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

Replaces measure.

BACKGROUND:

A septic system is the most common method of sewage treatment for homes and businesses that are not connected to an area-wide sewage system. Over 30 percent of Oregonians rely on septic systems to treat wastewater from their homes and businesses. The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) regulates the siting, design, installation and ongoing operation and maintenance of septic systems. Properly functioning septic systems treat sewage to minimize groundwater and surface water pollution. Septic systems which fail or malfunction can pollute Oregon's land and waterways with raw sewage and create public health hazards.

Senate Bill 1563A would require DEQ to award grants for developing and administering a low-interest loan program for the repair, replacement, upgrade or evaluation of residential or small business on-site septic systems. The Act appropriates \$250,000 for the biennium beginning July 1, 2015 to DEQ to administer the program and award grants.