

HB 2327 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

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Meeting Dates: 3/15, 3/20

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires recipients of Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) grants to maintain liability insurance in connection with grant. Guidelines for liability coverage to be established by OWEB in consultation with grant recipient. Ends Oregon Department of Administrative Services' provision of liability insurance to OWEB grant recipients. Removes Healthy Streams Partnership from Oregon Plan statutes. Adds representative of United States Fish & Wildlife Service as non-voting member of OWEB. Removes requirement for OWEB to provide geographic information systems data on activities under Oregon Plan. Eliminates requirement for certain agencies to provide reports for OWEB to post to centralized repository. Changes due date of Oregon Plan Biennial Report to Governor and Legislative Assembly to January 15 of even-numbered years.

FISCAL: Has minimal fiscal impact

REVENUE: No revenue impact

House Vote: Passed. Ayes, 58; Excused, 2--Barreto, Gorsek

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Statewide watershed council and soil and water conservation district organizations can help local groups find liability coverage
- Provisions to clean up OWEB statutes, including removal of obsolete provisions

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) is a state agency that provides grants to help Oregonians improve the condition of local streams, rivers, wetlands and natural areas. Grant recipients are required to obtain liability insurance for projects funded through OWEB moneys. Liability coverage currently offered to grantees through the Department of Administration Services (DAS) is limited. House Bill 2327A would repeal language in statute that DAS may provide liability coverage for grantees at the expense of OWEB, instead requiring grant recipients to obtain liability insurance at levels commensurate with grant activities, the cost of which could be included in the grant.

House Bill 2327A would make a number of additional changes to the OWEB statutes, including allowing a representative from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, which helps fund and implement watershed enhancement programs across the state, to serve as a non-voting member of OWEB and changing the due date on the agency's biennial report so that the last six months of a biennium are included in the Oregon Plan report to the Legislature.