

SB 790 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

Prepared By: Daniel Gray, LPRO Intern

Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 3/29

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Oregon State University's College of Agricultural Sciences (College) to conduct study of *Arundo donax* L. and make recommendations regarding safeguards to prevent or reduce the chances of unintentional migration of the plant. Directs study to include but not be limited to determining ecological impacts of the unintentional migration of the plant and its ability to survive winter temperatures in Eastern Oregon. Directs study to consider conventional stocks of *Arundo donax* L. and any strains developed through genetic modification. Directs College to report its findings to the legislature no later than September 15, 2018. Declares emergency; takes effect upon passage.

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued.

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Arundo donax L., also known as giant cane, is a tall, perennial grass similar to bamboo that originates in areas around the Mediterranean Sea. In the United States, the plant is distributed in southwestern states spanning from California to Texas, in addition to Virginia, Kentucky and Missouri. Originally planted along waterways to control erosion, the plant is now considered an invasive species by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and California has spent about \$100 million trying to eradicate it. The plant does not spread as extensively in colder environments.

The plant has come under consideration as a biomass energy crop because it is hardy, fast growing and high-yield. Portland General Electric considered growing the plant for use in biomass combustion at Boardman power plant. In 2011 the state authorized a 400-acre test plot and required growers to post a \$1 million eradication bond.

Senate Bill 790 would direct the College of Agricultural Sciences at Oregon State University to conduct a study of *Arundo donax* L. and report to the legislature no later than September 15, 2018.