

SB 1023 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Human Services

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 3/29, 4/12

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Establishes Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Fund, separate from General Fund, and continuously appropriates money in fund to Department of Human Services for use administering programs for deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing individuals. Directs Public Utility Commission (PUC) to transfer certain percentage of surcharges collected in Residential Service Protection Fund to Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Fund. Sunsets January 2, 2020. Takes effect 91st day following adjournment sine die.

FISCAL: Fiscal Statement Issued

REVENUE: Revenue Statement Issued

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Budget concerns and possible amendments
- Necessity of Oregon to expand access to deaf and hard of hearing services; comparison to services in other states
- Merits of moving funding from Residential Services Protection Fund
- Necessity of telecommunications services access for hearing disabilities communities
- Current use of PUC's Residential Services Protection Fund
- Possible amendments

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Replaces provisions. Requires PUC to transfer up to \$200,000 from Residential Service Protection Fund to Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Fund. Requires DHS and PUC to enter agreement regarding transfer of funds.

BACKGROUND:

Oregon law establishes the Oregon Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Program in the Department of Human Services (DHS). The program is funded through DHS' General Fund appropriation. The Residential Service Protection Fund, established in 1987, is a separate fund in the state treasury that collects money from surcharges placed on telecommunication subscribers by the Public Utility Commission. The Residential Service Protection Fund includes an Account for Low Income Customers and an Account for the Deaf.

Senate Bill 1023 creates a separate Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Fund for DHS to use in administering programs for deaf, deaf-blind, or hard-of-hearing people. The measure also directs the Public Utility Commission to transfer a certain percentage of money from the Residential Service Protection Fund to the Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Fund.