

HB 2399 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Education

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Meeting Dates: 5/2

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Establishes Condon Collection at the University of Oregon Museum of Natural and Cultural History (MNCH) as official repository for paleontological material that may come into the possession of the State of Oregon. Assigns responsibility for material custody and safekeeping to the MNCH. Prohibits interference with existing collections in the possession of any post-secondary institution of education in Oregon. Allows individuals and private entities to gift a paleontological collection directly to any institution.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Importance of safeguarding fossil material in perpetuity
- Desire to make Oregon more competitive in collecting paleontological items
- Memoranda of understanding occur with cities and agencies to acknowledge legal title to collections, but also ensure fossil care

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

BACKGROUND:

The University of Oregon Museum of Natural and Cultural History (MNCH) is the largest natural history museum in Oregon, and is known as a center of paleontological and archeological collections in the Pacific Northwest. The MNCH has been the official repository for archaeological artifacts in Oregon statute since 1937. House Bill 2399 replicates that codification for paleontological artifacts.

The University of Oregon reports that this official designation would help ensure artifacts dispersed through commercial or private interests find a safe, long-term home, as well as build the museum's reputation and ability to serve as a local educational resource for paleontology.