

SB 373 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Agriculture and Natural Resources

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Meeting Dates: 4/25, 5/23

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) to develop and adopt by rule pilot program for urban deer population control. Requires city to first adopt ordinance, resolution or order declaring that deer populations have risen to levels that constitute public nuisance prior to petitioning Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) for assistance in reducing those populations. Stipulates that if ODFW makes such determination, program must allow local government body or agent to take deer to reduce populations within city limits. Requires pilot program rules to include direction on means and manner by which deer may be taken and prohibition on taking deer by dart or lethal injection; provision for edible portions of deer to be distributed to local food bank or charitable organization at expense of local government; requirement that if deer hides and antlers are not sold by local government to persons licensed to purchase them, antlers must be surrendered to ODFW; and provisions to ensure number of deer taken does not exceed number necessary to reduce deer population to level that no longer constitutes public nuisance. Directs ODFW to consult with governing bodies of cities where urban deer populations are of concern and with food banks or other charitable organizations that serve such cities. Requires local government to adopt ordinance restricting use of materials to lure, attract or entice deer prior to exercising any authority under this measure. Directs ODFW to first allow local governments to engage in activities under pilot program no later than January 1, 2019. Requires ODFW to report on program to Legislative Assembly during 2027 legislative session. Repeals pilot program on January 1, 2029.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Voluntary pilot program for cities to participate in and pay for
- Concerns about numbers of deer, eating commercial and recreationally grown crops, leaving waste, acting aggressively
- Need for public process and safeguards such as anti-feeding ordinance before pilot program begins

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

BACKGROUND:

Individual deer can consume 5-10 pounds of forage per day, depending on the season. In urban and neighborhood settings, browsing can impact flower and vegetable gardens, damage landscapes and empty bird feeders. Browsing can damage economically valuable trees and other plants and reduce the yield of fruit trees. Bucks can damage shrubs and saplings by rubbing the bark with their antlers. Increased deer populations can also spread tick-borne illnesses, such as Lyme disease, in addition to other diseases and parasites. There have been cases of deer attacking people and pets, and in some cases killing small pets. Increased deer population in urban areas can also lead to increased vehicle accidents.

Senate Bill 373A would direct the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission to establish a pilot program to control urban deer populations in cities where deer constitute a public nuisance.