

HB 2296 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Prepared By: Matt Stayner, Budget Analyst

Meeting Dates: 6/26, 6/29

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Increases application fee for property owner seeking permit to construct, alter, abandon or convert well on their property without being a licensed water well constructor from \$25 to \$500. Increases required bond amounts from \$5,000 to \$10,000 for property owner. Increases required bond amounts from \$10,000 to \$20,000 for persons who contract to drill wells. Eliminates condition requiring property owner to obtain permit if using well drilling machine.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- General cost of water well construction
- Estimated number of landowner built wells, 15 to 40
- Cost of remediation on wells that were incorrectly constructed
- Contamination of wells
- Co-mingling of aquifers
- Limitation of well constructors liability
- Ability of the Water Resources Department to ensure correct well construction
- Total number of domestic water wells constructed each year, between 2,000 and 3,000

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

According to the Secretary of State's Audit Report issued December 2016, there are approximately 256,800 known wells in Oregon, with several thousand new wells drilled each year. Wells have various uses that range from providing drinking water, water for irrigation and industry, and information about groundwater levels throughout the state. Because wells extend deep underground it is important to ensure that wells are constructed properly so that separate aquifers do not interact and contaminants do not seep into the groundwater. The Water Resources Department sets well construction standards, licenses well drillers, approves landowner permits and inspects wells. Well construction standards are set in rule and approval from the Department is required if circumstances require deviation from the standards.

HB 2296 would increase the application fee for a property owner seeking a permit to construct, alter, abandon or convert a well on their property without being a licensed water well constructor from \$25 to \$500 and increase the required bond amounts from \$5,000 to \$10,000 for property owner drilling their own well. The Act also increases the required bond amount from \$10,000 to \$20,000 for a person who is contracted with to drill wells.