

SB 85 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Business and Transportation

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Meeting Dates: 2/8

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Modifies the membership of the Telecommunication Dvices Access Program Advisory Committee.

FISCAL: No fiscal impact

REVENUE: No revenue impact

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC) is the state's regulatory body for investor-owned utilities, including telephone utilities. The Commission's Residential Service Protection Fund (RSPF) section oversees three programs: that assist customers with telecommunications services: the Oregon Telephone Assistance Program reduces monthly telecommunications bills for qualifying Oregonians; the Oregon Telecommunications Relay Service allows persons with hearing and/or speech disabilities to place and receive phone calls; and the Telecommunication Devices Access Program (TDAP) provides adaptive equipment to Oregonians with hearing, vision, speech, mobility or cognitive impairments.

As part of its TDAP program, the Commission administers the TDAP Advisory Committee, which includes members who are deaf, hard of hearing, are speech impaired, are professionals in the field of speech impairment, and representatives of telephone companies that provide, or are interested in providing, telecommunication devices access relay services. Statute specifies that the advisory committee is comprised of 21 members; however, PUC indicates that it is difficult to fill vacancies on the advisory committee. In addition, there is a desire to add representation for persons with vision impairments.

Senate Bill 85 modifies the membership of the Telecommunications Devices Access Program Advisory Committee as follows: by reducing the number of consumers from nine to five and adding a visually-impaired member; specifying that the professional member may be in the field of visual impairment; and removing the PUC member.