

HB 2634 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Agriculture and Natural Resources

Prepared By: Misty Freeman, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 2/16

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Removes language in ORS 496.018 defining disability under wildlife laws for purpose of certification by licensed physician, certified nurse practitioner or licensed physician assistant. Replaces with definition of disability in statute relating to unlawful discrimination against persons with disabilities (ORS 659A.104). Allows person with disability under ORS 695A.104 to obtain written certification of disability that includes description of impacts and interference with ability to participate in wildlife-related recreational activities. Directs Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission to adopt by rule Oregon Accessibility Permit program to allow reasonable accommodations for disabled persons to participate in activities requiring license, tag or permit. Details accommodations must not fundamentally alter nature of service, program or activity of Oregon Fish and Wildlife Department (Department); jeopardize personal safety; or pose undue financial or administrative burden on Department.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

BACKGROUND:

Currently, to be considered a person with a disability under Oregon wildlife laws, a person must have written certification from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or any branch of the Armed Forces showing the person to be at least 65 percent disabled. Alternatively, the person may have written certification from a licensed physician, certified nurse practitioner or licensed physician assistant that the person is permanently unable to walk; restricted by lung disease; has a limiting cardiac condition; has a permanent physical impairment that prevents holding a firearm, bow, or fishing rod; or has visual impairment. Some accommodations are available for a person with a disability to engage in wildlife-related recreational activities, for example, allowance for a visually impaired hunter to obtain assistance from an accompanying hunter outlined in ORS 498.170.

House Bill 2634 would expand the definition of a person with disabilities under Oregon wildlife laws and bring it into alignment with the definition used in ORS 659A.104, the statute addressing unlawful discrimination against persons with disabilities. The bill would also create a program for issuing accessibility permits and provide reasonable accommodations for disabled persons to participate in wildlife-related recreational activities.