

HB 2296 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Energy and Environment

Prepared By: Beth Reiley, LPRO Analyst

Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 2/13, 2/15, 2/22

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Creates application process for person to use when requesting approval to use one or more special standards in construction, alteration, abandonment or conversion of wells. Requires person to pay \$100 application fee for one well and \$200 application fee for two or more wells. Stipulates fees paid be deposited into Water Resources Department (Department) Operating Fund to be applied solely toward personnel cost associated with conceptual, requested or actual use of special standards. Authorizes person considering filing application to request consultation with Department. Requires Department to evaluate any information supplied, provide preliminary advice on likelihood of approval or inform person of any additional information needed to provide preliminary advice.

Increases required bond amounts from \$10,000 to \$20,000 for persons who contract to drill wells.

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 \$20,000 for property owner. Eliminates condition requiring property owner to obtain permit if using well drilling machine.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Removes language establishing application process for person to use when requesting approval to use one or more special standards in construction, alteration, abandonment or conversion of wells.

FISCAL: Fiscal impact issued

REVENUE: No revenue impact

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 (Department) sets well construction standards, licenses well drillers, approves landowner permits and inspects wells. Well construction standards are set in rule and require approval from the Department if circumstances require deviation from the standards.

House Bill 2296 would establish an application process and fee when a well requires deviation from the standards. The Act also increases the landowner permit application fee and increases bond requirements.