

FISCAL IMPACT OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

79th Oregon Legislative Assembly – 2017 Regular Session
Legislative Fiscal Office

Measure: SB 434

*Only Impacts on Original or Engrossed
Versions are Considered Official*

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Date: 2/21/2017

Measure Description:

Creates Task Force on Wildfire Damage Financial Relief.

Government Unit(s) Affected:

Oregon Housing and Community Services, Legislative Assembly

Analysis:

Senate Bill 434 establishes the 9-member Task Force on Wildfire Damage Financial Relief charged with studying the economic and other post-disaster needs of households suffering loss of housing from wildfires occurring in the last five years, including the Canyon Creek Complex fire in 2015. The task force is to determine if the maximum household income level to qualify for financial assistance from the Wildfire Damage Housing Relief Account should be increased. The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on its passage. The task force sunsets on December 31, 2019.

House Bill 3148 (2015) appropriated \$50,000 General Fund to the Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) Department to establish the Wildfire Damage Housing Relief Account to issue grants from the account in the amount of \$5,000 each to qualifying households that suffer a loss of housing due to a wildfire. The bill applies to persons or families residing in Oregon and whose federal adjusted gross income for the preceding year is 75 percent of federal poverty guidelines, and who suffer a loss of housing due to a wildfire. OHCS reports that, to date, there have been two applications and no candidate that meets the qualifying household income level.

Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS)

The fiscal impact of this bill on OHCS is indeterminate depending on the scope of work undertaken by the task force. The bill directs OHCS to provide staff support to the task force. OHCS reports that the agency would need to hire temporary part-time staff in order to perform the work of supporting the task force, including attending task force meetings, collecting data, providing analysis, and preparing the report to the Legislative Assembly. If the task force chooses to meet regularly from its establishment until sunset, OHCS could incur staffing costs that could range from \$30,890 to \$123,558 General Fund. Note that OHCS is authorized to use funds in the Wildfire Damage Housing Relief Account to recover expenses relating to administering payments from the account. It is unclear if OHCS is allowed to use these funds to recover the expenses of this task force.

Legislative Assembly

The bill specifies that non-legislative members of the task force are not entitled to compensation and reimbursement. However, four members of the task force will be legislative members who are entitled to per diem and travel reimbursement. Although the 2017-19 Legislative Branch budget contains funds allocated for interim committees and task forces, if the work required by this task force, or if the cumulative enactment of other legislation with interim committees and task forces exceeds expenditure levels beyond those assumed in the 2017-19 budget, additional General Fund resources may be required.