

**HB 2296 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**  
**House Committee On Energy and Environment**

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**Action Date:** 02/22/17  
**Action:** Do pass with amendments  
and be referred to Ways and Means by prior reference. (Printed A-Eng.)  
**Vote:** 7-1-1-0  
**Yeas:** 7 - Barnhart, Bentz, Helm, Holvey, Johnson, Power, Smith DB  
**Nays:** 1 - Reschke  
**Exc:** 1 - Boone  
**Fiscal:** Fiscal impact issued  
**Revenue:** No revenue impact  
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**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 \$20,000 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:**

- Poorly constructed wells can lead to groundwater contamination and commingled aquifers
- On average Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) receives 29 landowner applications a year to drill wells
- Estimated monetary value of OWRD staff time to work on wells drilled by property owner

**EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:**

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.

**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 approval from the Department is required if circumstances require deviation from the standards.

House Bill 2296A 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 \$20,000 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.