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Prepared by: Kim To
 Reviewed by: Laurie Byerly, Gregory Jolivet, Ken Rocco
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Measure Description:

Establishes Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Fund.

Government Unit(s) Affected:

Public Utility Commission (PUC), Department of Human Services (DHS),

Summary of Expenditure Impact - Public Utility Commission:

	2017-19 Biennium	2019-21 Biennium
Other Funds		
Residential Service Protection Fund	(400,000)	(400,000)
Total Other Funds	(\$400,000)	(\$400,000)

Summary of Expenditure Impact - Department of Human Services:

	2017-19 Biennium	2019-21 Biennium
Other Funds		
Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing Program	400,000	400,000
Total Other Funds	\$400,000	\$400,000

Analysis:

Senate Bill 1023 establishes the Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Fund separate and distinct from the General Fund. Interest earned does not revert to the General Fund. Moneys in the Fund are continuously appropriated to the Department of Human Services (DHS) for the administration of programs for individuals who are deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing. The bill directs the Public Utility Commission (PUC) to transfer annually an amount of moneys not to exceed \$200,000 from the residential service protection and assistive telecommunication devices surcharge moneys to this Fund. The bill takes effect on the 91st day after the date on which the 2017 legislative session adjourns sine die.

Public Utility Commission (PUC)

The fiscal impact of this bill is estimated to be a \$400,000 Other Funds transfer from PUC to the Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Fund. With passage of this bill PUC and DHS anticipate working together to examine resources and entering into an interagency agreement. PUC reports that assuming passage of SB 84 (2017), the agency will not need additional limitation increase to reallocate these funds. The surcharge is currently seven cents and by statute, the rate cannot exceed 35 cents. Under current practice, the surcharge provides revenue for the following PUC Residential Service Protection programs, as required by law:

- The Oregon Telecommunications Relay Service (OTRS), as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, allows persons with a hearing or speech disability to use the telephone system via a text telephone (TTY) or other device to call persons with or without such disabilities.
- The Oregon Telephone Assistance Program (OTAP) is the state-mandated counterpart of the Federal Communication Commission’s (FCC) Lifeline program. It provides eligible low-income customers with a discount on monthly residential or cellular phone service.

- The Telecommunication Devices Access Program (TDAP) loans specialized telephone equipment to Oregonians who have a loss in hearing, speech, mobility, cognition, or vision.
- The Emergency Medical Certificates (EMC) Program allows customers of PUC-regulated telecommunications, electric, or natural gas, to enter into a time payment arrangement to stop disconnection of service for qualified medical conditions.

Department of Human Services (DHS)

If Senate Bill 1018 (2017) becomes law, the amount transferred from PUC to DHS will off-set the costs of providing the services identified in SB 1018 (2017). DHS estimated the cost of launching the Oregon Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing Program as specified by SB 1018 (2017) to be \$579,148 for the 2017-19 Biennium, and \$824,392 for the 2019-21 biennium.

Note that SB 1023-1 directs PUC and DHS to establish a plan for future reductions of this transfer of moneys from the Residential Service Protection Fund. If DHS cannot identify an additional source of revenue, and the agencies are mandated to reduce this transfer amount, the funding source for the Oregon Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing Program may not be sustainable.