

HB 2213 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Rules

Action Date: 06/01/17

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 - Hack, Holvey, Kennemer, McLane, Nosse, Smith Warner, Williamson

Nays: 1 - Barreto

Exc: 1 - Rayfield

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: Revenue impact issued

Prepared By: Erin Seiler, LPRO Analyst

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Establishes Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund (OCRF) for purpose of carrying out lawful activities that protect, maintain or enhance fish and wildlife resources in Oregon. Activities may include: promotion of conservation programs and strategies identified in Oregon Conservation Strategy; improving engagement of public and educational outreach in support of healthy fish, wildlife and habitats; and other conservation, management, research, habitat improvement, enforcement, outdoor recreation or education activities. Establishes Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee (OCRAC) as advisory committee to State Fish and Wildlife Commission (SFWC). SFWC will determine size and geographical representation of OCRAC members who will be appointed by Governor. OCRAC will review policies of State Department of Fish and Wildlife (SDFW) and make recommendations to SFWC and SDFW regarding implementation of activities funded by OCRF. Appropriates \$11 million to OCRF from General Fund for 2017-2019 biennium. Declares emergency, effective upon passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Work of Task Force on Funding for Fish, Wildlife, and Related Outdoor Recreation and Education
- Types of projects that OCRF money would fund
- Implementation of Oregon Conservation Strategy
- Composition of OCRAC
- Diversifying and expanding funding sources for SDFW
- Current funding structure burdens small group of users (hunters, anglers, etc) for statewide resource
- All Oregonians should contribute to funding SDFW through General Fund

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Replaces original measure.

BACKGROUND:

The State Department of Fish and Wildlife (SDFW) is responsible for conservation and management of fish and wildlife and their habitats. SDFW has historically been funded primarily through the sale of hunting and fishing licenses and associated federal excise taxes. Over time however, participation in hunting and fishing nationally and in Oregon has declined, and even when stabilized, these fee payers continue to be shouldered, through fee increases, with responsibility for costs tied to a management regime that is increasingly complex as a result of modern legal requirements, overlapping jurisdictions, and changing public demands and engagement with nature. Current challenges facing fish, wildlife and the health of their habitats are not being met by the current funding model.

HB 2213 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

The Joint Interim Task Force on Funding for Fish, Wildlife and Related Outdoor Recreation and Education (Task Force) was established by House Bill 2402 (2015). The Task Force was charged with addressing the unfunded and increasing costs of conservation and management of fish and wildlife and their habitats, and associated recreational and educational opportunities, by identifying new, diversified and sustainable sources of revenue to supplement existing funding. The Task Force was to develop recommendations for legislation to strengthen SDFW's ability to carry out conservation and related outdoor recreation and education programs that benefit individuals that neither hunt nor fish; maintain and enhance hunting and angling opportunities; improve public access and habitat conservation programs related to hunting and angling; improve public education about the recreational, economic and conservation benefits of hunting and angling; use hunting and angling license fees and associated federal funds in a manner that is fair and equitable to fee payers; ensure, to the greatest extent possible, that future fee increases, new fees or other new revenue streams to fund SDFW are developed and implemented in a manner that ensures that individual beneficiaries of SDFW's services equitably contribute to its revenues; and prioritize actions and allocation of resources to provide for SDFW's long-term sustainability and its ability to achieve its mission.

The Task Force concluded that a more holistic and equitable approach to fish and wildlife conservation, management, recreation and education is needed. A broader public understanding is needed, particularly in regard to the benefits of SDFW's work, its funding challenges, and the educational and recreational opportunities associated with its programs, as well as opportunities to enhance those programs, and SDFW's public and private partnerships and fiscal sustainability.

House Bill 2213-A codifies Task Force recommendations: establish an Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund (OCRF) dedicated to conservation, management, research, habitat improvement, administration, enforcement and other activities that protect, maintain or enhance the native fish and wildlife of the state of Oregon; allocate an initial \$11 million from the General Fund to stabilize SDFW; and establish the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee (OCRAC) to provide ongoing review and oversight of SDFW's use of moneys allocated to the OCRF.