

SCR 1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

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Meeting Dates: 1/22

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Declares legislative support for the development of environmentally appropriate closed-loop pump storage projects and encouragement for regulators to support pump storage and utilities to use pump storage in their energy resource mixes to meet future capacity needs.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

According to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission), pump storage projects store energy and generate electricity by moving water between two reservoirs at different elevations. When the demand for electricity is low, excess electric generation capacity is used to pump water from the lower to the upper reservoir. Conversely, when the demand for electricity is high, water is released from the upper to the lower reservoir through a turbine to generate electricity. To date, the Commission has authorized a total of 24 pump storage projects currently in operation, with a total installed capacity of over 16,500 megawatts. Additionally, there are two classifications of pump storage projects, closed-loop and open-loop. Closed-loop pump storage projects refer to projects that are not continuously connected to a naturally flowing water feature, whereas open-loop pump storage projects refer to projects that are continuously connected to a naturally flowing water feature.

SCR 1 would support the development and utilization of closed-loop pump storage projects by Oregon utilities as a possible energy resource in order to meet their energy capacity needs.