

FISCAL IMPACT OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

Measure: SB 394

80th Oregon Legislative Assembly – 2019 Regular Session
Legislative Fiscal Office

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

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Measure Description:

Permits translator districts to use specified technologies.

Government Unit(s) Affected:

Special Districts

Summary of Fiscal Impact:

Costs related to the measure are indeterminate at this time - See explanatory analysis.

Analysis:

In 1975, the Oregon Legislature passed HB 2651 (Oregon Laws 1975, Chapter 286), which permitted the creation of translator districts to receive, amplify, and transmit television signals to areas not covered by the signals. The Blue Mountain Translator District (BMTD), which formed in 1978, is currently Oregon’s only translator district. BMTD serves areas of Baker and Union counties. Under current law, translator districts are authorized to construct, maintain and operate translator stations to transmit and receive television broadcast signals in areas too remote to receive television signals otherwise.

The measure would authorize translator districts to invest in and make use of additional technologies, including aggregation and transmission of local emergency alert systems, transmission of signals using Advanced Television Systems Committee (ATSC) 3.0 standards, transmission of video on-demand content using ATSC 3.0 standards, transmission of a channel owned by a translator district or another entity that originates on district translators, and ownership of a local channel. The measure would repeal the ability of translator districts to engage in certain content replacement operations. It would also permit translator districts to raise revenue through the sale of advertisements and on-demand content on a local channel.

BMTD anticipates capital outlay for emergency alerts transmission, ATSC 3.0 deployment, and ownership of a local television channel. At this time, BMTD anticipates minimal capital outlay associated with emergency alerts system deployment and creation of a local television channel (owned and operated by BMTD). The capital outlay associated with deploying ATSC 3.0, however, would depend on the availability of on-demand content that BMTD and content producers are able to provide. Furthermore, the costs of placing content on a local television channel would depend on whether BMTD owns the media server that sends content to its main transmitter, or whether BMTD leases a digital subchannel. The fiscal impact of the measure is thus indeterminate.