

HB 2851 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Energy and Environment

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Meeting Dates: 2/26

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Makes legislative findings and declares water use data fundamental to water management, distribution, and planning for future water needs. Declares water use measurement and reporting beneficial to all water users. Declares the policy of the state to actively promote water use measurement and reporting and to encourage federal, state, and local government coordination and cooperation to do so. Establishes that if an entity is required by Oregon Water Resources Department (WRD) to measure water use under a water right permit, certificate, limited license, decree, order of determination or ground water registration established before, on, or after the effective date of this Act, the entity may be required to report the measured water to WRD. Directs Water Resources Commission to adopt rules to carry out these provisions.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

By law, all surface and groundwater in Oregon belongs to the public and is to be used for a beneficial purpose without waste. Water users, with some exceptions, must obtain a water right to use water from any source, including rivers, streams, lakes, and groundwater. When water is scarce, water users are allocated water based on the date of their water right, with holders of the oldest water rights allocated water first, and holders of newer water rights receiving their allocation according to the availability of water. Many water rights include conditions that require the water user to submit data to the Oregon Water Resources Department (WRD), including water use reports, pump tests, and in the case of groundwater, static water level data.

House Bill 2851 would establish that water users who are required by WRD to measure water use under a water right may also be required to report the measured data to WRD.