

HB 2067 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Natural Resources

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Meeting Dates: 2/7, 2/26

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Removes sunset dates for the Oregon Landowner Damage Program and the Access and Habitat Program. Takes effect 91st day following adjournment sine die.

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Fiscal impact issued

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Oregon Landowner Damage Program was established in 2013 (House Bill 2027) to address damage caused by elk on privately-owned lands in Oregon. Property damage commonly attributed to elk includes agricultural crop and pasture reduction due to grazing; tree damage due to bark gnawing or seedling pulling; and destruction of fences, gardens, and yards. The law authorizes the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to grant antlerless elk damage tags to landowners for areas where: elk are currently causing damage; there has been a history of elk damage coupled with actions to alleviate elk damage; or ODFW designates an area as an elk de-emphasis area. Elk de-emphasis areas are characterized by high percentages of private land with on-going elk damage to private property and agricultural crops. ODFW typically does not propose Management Objectives for these areas since the focus is to minimize elk numbers and damage. The program does not impose a limit on the number of total damage tags available for each landowner but only five damage tags may be valid at any one time. The program also does not impose a minimum acreage requirement for landowner participation. In addition, if the landowner has unused general season elk tags or controlled hunt elk tags, they may exchange them for landowner damage tags. The Oregon Landowner Damage Program is scheduled to sunset on January 2, 2020.

The Access and Habitat Program was established in 1993 to fund programs that benefit wildlife resources in Oregon. The law established the Access and Habitat Board (Board), which recommends habitat and access programs and funding to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission. The Board is required to: recommend a mix of projects to balance access and habitat benefits; recommend projects that are to be implemented by volunteers; recommend programs that recognize and encourage landowner contributions to wildlife and that minimize economic loss to those landowners; encourage agreements with landowners who request damage control hunts to ensure public access to those hunts; and encourage projects that result in obtaining matching funds from other sources. The program is scheduled to sunset on December 31, 2019.

House Bill 2067 would remove sunset dates for the Oregon Landowner Damage Program and the Access and Habitat Program.