

HB 2453 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Economic Development

Prepared By: Melissa Leoni, LPRO Analyst

Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 3/4

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs the Oregon Business Development Department to create a workforce development plan for the Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Region to communicate the workforce advantages of and opportunities in the western Treasure Valley and to encourage people to move to and work in the region. Requires the Department to submit plan to the interim legislative committees related to economic development on or before September 15, 2020.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

House Bill 2012 (2017) established the seven-member Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Board, appointed by the Governor, to formulate and implement strategies and practices for strategic investment in workforce and economic development in the Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Region. The region is defined as being located within 20 miles of the Oregon border with Idaho, including primarily the cities of Ontario, Vale and Nyssa, Willowcreek, Brogan, and areas southwest of Vale. The Board makes recommendations for improvements in education, workforce development, land use, and other regulations. The Board is also authorized to make grants or loans to eligible applicants from the Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Fund to advance the workforce development and economic development of the region.

According to the Board's December 2018 report to the House Interim Committee on Economic Development and Trade, "a strong potential exists for Oregon's Malheur County and its communities along the Idaho border, but the region has experienced stagnant growth, economic decline and workforce challenges in recent years while the neighboring communities of Idaho have seen significant development. The very different laws and policies of the two states have resulted in a disadvantage for the Eastern Oregon border region. The Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Board will advance policies, projects and programs that address and overcome these disadvantages. The Board will achieve this through its power to make grants and loans supporting economic and workforce development in the region; and to seek waivers or exemptions from state laws, rules and regulations that inhibit growth; as well as to encourage legislation tailored to the region's unique needs."

The Director of the Oregon Business Development Department or the Director's designee is an ex-officio nonvoting member of the Board. The Department also provides staff to the Board to carry out its responsibilities.

House Bill 2453 directs the Oregon Business Development Department to develop a workforce development plan for the Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Region to communicate the workforce advantages of and opportunities in the western Treasure Valley and to encourage people to move to and work in the region.