

HB 2455 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Economic Development

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Meeting Dates: 3/4

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Defines development or expansion of broadband Internet access service as economic development for authorized purposes of the Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Board, including awarding grants and loans from the Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Board Fund. Makes other changes to Board statutes. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

House Bill 2012 (2017) established the Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Board, a seven-member board appointed by the Governor to formulate and implement strategies and practices for strategic investment in workforce development and economic development, the Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Region, and the Oregon Border Economic Development Fund. The Board recommends improvements in education, workforce development, land use, and other regulations. The region is defined as 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 is also authorized to make grants or loans to eligible applicants to advance the workforce development and economic development of the region. The Legislative Assembly approved a one-time \$5,000,000 General Fund appropriation to the Oregon Business Development Department for the use of the Board to make loans and grants to eligible applicants.

According to the Board's December 2018 report to the House Interim Committee on Economic Development and Trade, the Board has created a list of funding priority areas, including projects or programs that improve competitiveness with Idaho, increase the Region's residential property tax base, enhance economic vitality and opportunity, enhance or expand workforce development and growth, expand transportation infrastructure to facilitate moving traded sector goods or services, develop regionally significant industrial sites, extend private utilities to regionally significant industrial sites, and provide support services and technical assistance to entrepreneurs and business owners in the region.

House Bill 2455 defines development or expansion of broadband Internet access service as economic development for authorized purposes of the Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Board, including awarding grants and loans from the Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Board Fund. The measure also makes other nonsubstantive changes to Board statutes.