

HB 3340 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Energy and Environment

Prepared By: Misty Freeman, LPRO Analyst

Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 3/14

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Declares harmful algal blooms to be a threat to safe drinking water and public health. Directs Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to address harmful algal blooms. Directs OHA, in coordination with DEQ, to identify water sources that are susceptible to harmful algal blooms; develop a system for regular monitoring and testing of susceptible water sources, prioritizing sources of domestic and municipal drinking water and bodies of water accessed by the public for recreation; and develop a protocol for issuing hazard advisory alerts to the public in the event of a harmful algal bloom. Directs DEQ, in coordination with OHA, to develop and maintain a coordinated state agency strategy for harmful algal bloom monitoring and response; produce timely and high-quality data to allow OHA to determine the level of risk to public health; maintain a publicly accessible clearinghouse of all data related to harmful algal blooms; identify sources of pollutants that contribute to occurrences of harmful algal blooms; develop strategies for reducing said pollutants; and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies implemented for reducing pollutants. Directs DEQ to make efforts to identify point sources or nonpoint sources contributing to the susceptibility of specific bodies of water to harmful algal blooms, and to develop pollution reduction plans for point and nonpoint sources that are identified. Requires DEQ to submit a biannual report to the legislature by September 15 of even-numbered years that includes a quantitative and narrative summary and evaluation of DEQ's activities in administering this Act.

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued.

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Harmful algal blooms are caused by high concentrations of certain types of algae that can produce toxic compounds. These blooms can cause sickness and death in humans, pets, and livestock who come into contact with or drink the water. Blooms can also result in hypoxia, or low oxygen, in water bodies, which can kill fish and other wildlife. The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) is the agency responsible for posting warnings and educating the public about harmful algal blooms. Once a body of water has been identified as having a harmful algal bloom, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is responsible for investigating the causes, identifying sources of pollution, and writing a pollution reduction plan.

House Bill 3340 would direct OHA and DEQ to coordinate to address harmful algal blooms in Oregon. The bill would direct OHA to identify water bodies susceptible to harmful algal blooms, to develop a system to monitor and test such water bodies, and to develop a protocol for alerting the public when a harmful algal bloom occurs. The bill would direct DEQ to develop a state strategy for responding to harmful algal blooms, produce timely and high-quality data to allow OHA to calculate level of public health risk, maintain a clearinghouse with data on harmful algal blooms, and identify and work to address point and nonpoint sources of pollutants that contribute to harmful algal blooms.

PRELIMINARY