

SB 431 -1, -2 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

Prepared By: Beth Patrino, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 2/19, 4/4

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Creates urban flood safety and water quality district in portion of Multnomah County within urban growth boundary adopted by Metro, for purposes of managing and improving levee system, drainage and natural areas to provide for flood safety and contribute to water quality, habitat, and landscape resiliency. Provides for selection of board of directors. Sets forth powers and duties of district and district board. Authorizes district board to impose charges, assessments and taxes and issue bonds. Authorizes district board to dissolve certain drainage districts and water improvement corporations. Requires urban flood safety and water quality district to assume dissolved entity's duties, assets, and liabilities. Makes conforming amendments. Takes effect on 91st day following adjournment sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Federal levee standards changed after Hurricane Katrina
- Measure affects only four Columbia corridor districts
- Issues around environmental aspects

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Modifies list of Governor appointments to district board of voting directors to specify a director representing the Port of Portland.

-2 Replaces measure. Revises definition of "works." Adds definitions of "green infrastructure" and "landscape resiliency." Modifies purpose of urban flood safety and water quality district (district). Modifies membership and appointing authority of initial board of directors. Allows, but does not require, board to appoint a stakeholder advisory committee. Modifies powers of district. Directs district to prepare plan for watershed and habitat improvement and landscape resiliency within the managed floodplain. Deletes language regarding irrigation agreements. Adds provision regarding prohibited conduct and related penalty.

BACKGROUND:

A levee is a man-made structure, usually an earthen embankment, designed and constructed to contain, control, and divert the flow of water to reduce risk from temporary flooding. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, when new flood maps are being issued for a community with a levee system and the levee is found to no longer meet federal standards for reducing the risks associated with a major flood, the flood risk around the levee is mapped as a high-risk area. Property owners in high-risk areas are subject to federal flood insurance requirements once the new maps take effect and must purchase a flood insurance policy if they have mortgages from a federally regulated or insured lender.

Senate Bill 431 would create an urban flood safety and water quality district in that portion of Multnomah County within the urban growth boundary adopted by Metro.