

HB 2373 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Veterans and Emergency Preparedness

Action Date: 04/02/19

Action: Do pass with amendments and be referred to Ways and Means. (Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 8-0-0-0

Yeas: 8 - Evans, Findley, Lewis, Meek, Neron, Wallan, Wilde, Zika

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

Prepared By: Patrick Brennan, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 3/12, 3/26, 4/2

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Allows the State Forester to order the use of wildfire suppression personnel, equipment, and services on any federal lands within state borders.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Recent history of major wildfires in Oregon and western United States
- Different approaches to wildland firefighting
- Impact of wildfire smoke on health

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Stipulates that State Forester may not conduct wildfire suppression on military land withdrawn from public access without first obtaining permission from appropriate military authority. Stipulates that State Forester may not conduct wildfire suppression on Tribal land without first obtaining permission from the tribal government.

BACKGROUND:

The 2018 wildfire season was one of the worst in recorded history in western North America. Oregon experienced 10 wildfires that each consumed more than 10,000 acres, including the Klondike fire in Josephine County (175,258 acres) and the Boxcar fire in Wasco County (100,207 acres). California had 17 fires that exceeded 10,000 acres burned, including two of the most destructive in recent memory: the Carr fire (229,651 acres), which consumed over 2,000 structures and killed eight, and the Mendocino Complex fire, which destroyed 459,123 acres. In British Columbia, 11 different fires each consumed more than 50,000 acres, the largest being the Tweedsmuir Complex fire which burned 745,140 acres.