

SB 1516 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Wildfire Reduction and Recovery

Action Date: 02/12/20

Action: Do pass with amendments. Refer to Ways and Means by prior reference. (Printed A-Eng).

Vote: 4-1-0-0

Yeas: 4 - Baertschiger Jr, Frederick, Golden, Prozanski

Nays: 1 - Thatcher

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: Revenue impact issued

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Meeting Dates: 2/5, 2/10, 2/12

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Creates a program for the periodic review and modernization of the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) structure and programs to ensure effectiveness and efficiency. Specifies periodic review requirements, and allows ODF to retain the services of third-party evaluators to support modernization efforts. Allows modernization to include hiring, assigning, reassigning, classifying, or reclassifying personnel to promote recruitment, retention, and effective use of staff. Requires the modernization program to ensure that programs are supplied with modern equipment in the amounts and types that ODF deems appropriate. Requires the State Forester to assess \$10.80 on each tax lot assessed under forest protection district statutes, in addition to any other assessment prescribed in those statutes. Requires that moneys must be paid into the ODF Account, and may be expended under the modernization program for two administrative positions and up to 35 permanent full-time positions with duties to fight or prevent wildfire. Appropriates \$6 million General Fund moneys for the biennium ending June 30, 2021 to ODF: at least \$1 million for firefighting severity resources, and the remainder for the described positions. Takes effect on the 91st day following adjournment sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Department seasonal workforce status and importance of skilled staff retention
- Vision for use of additional staff resources related to wildfire mitigation defensible space efforts
- State aviation assets: value in fire containment, aging fleet, and increasing resource costs
- Funding mechanism, including landowner assessment on ODF protected lands

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Requires the State Forester to assess \$10.80 on each tax lot assessed under forest protection district statutes, in addition to any other assessment prescribed in those statutes. Requires that moneys must be paid into the Oregon Department of Forestry Account, and may be expended under the modernization program for two administrative positions and up to 35 permanent full-time positions with duties to fight or prevent wildfire. Appropriates \$6 million General Fund moneys for the biennium ending June 30, 2021 to ODF: at least \$1 million for firefighting severity resources, and the remainder for the described positions. Eliminates emergency clause and prescribes an effective date for the 91st day following adjournment sine die.

BACKGROUND:

The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) Fire Protection program protects 16 million acres of forest, including privately owned, state owned, and by contract, federally owned forests in western Oregon. The current statutory funding mechanism for fire protection relies on a mix of assessments to private and public landowners within the 12 fire protection districts for which ODF has jurisdiction.

SB 1516 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Bill 1516-A would create a program for the periodic review and modernization of ODF structure and programs to ensure effectiveness and efficiency, and would appropriate moneys for converting seasonal positions into permanent full-time positions and for wildfire equipment resource needs.