

HB 2295 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Veterans and Emergency Management

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Sub-Referral To: House Committee On Revenue

Meeting Dates: 2/9

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Allows fire chief, or representative of fire chief, of any county may extinguish uncontrolled fire found to be burning in unprotected area if chief or representative has been authorized by its governing body of county to extinguish such fires. Allows governing body of county that extinguished fire to bill property owner for cost of fire protection service. Allows county to annually levy tax upon taxable property based on assessed value of all taxable property within zone, for the purpose of furnishing fire protection; or to arrange for optional subscription to services that prevent or control fire occurring within the limits of zone. Provides that fire-fighting forces and equipment of fire-fighting organization assigned under Emergency Conflagration Act include fire-fighting forces and equipment of entity that contracts with county, city or district to provide fire protection services. Allows board of county commissioners to adopt and enforce county fire prevention code. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

Subsequent referral to the House Committee on Revenue

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Allows county to contract with fire contractor that has received training approved by, and certification from, Department of Public Safety Standards and Training; and possesses contract with 9-1-1 jurisdiction. Allows board of rural fire protection district to adopt fire prevention code. Allows county commissioners to adopt fire prevention code for areas within county that are outside boundaries of rural fire protection districts.

BACKGROUND:

In Oregon, there are 254 special districts that provide fire protection. Those districts are not part of any state, county, or city government but are created based on statutes which determine how they are overseen. Rural fire protection districts (RFPD), found in the Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) Chapter 478, were created in 1957 and along with ORS Chapter 198, provide the process to establish and maintain a RFPD as a Special District of Oregon. By contrast, a Zone 2 is created by the County Commissioners which authorizes them to levy a tax within an area defined by the Commissioners to create and maintain firefighting and fire protection equipment and facilities. The Zone 2 designation predates ORS Chapter 478 and only its funding allowances can be found in statute; in ORS 476.330 and 476.340. The last Zone 2 operation ended in 1999 when Crook County created its RFPD.

House Bill 2295 authorizes a fire chief, or representative of the fire chief, of any county to extinguish an uncontrolled fire found to be burning in an unprotected area, if the chief or representative has been given authorization by the governing body of its county to extinguish such fires. The bill also allows the county to bill the property owner for the cost of its fire protection services; and to levy an annual tax based on the assessed value of all taxable property within the Zone 2, to fund its fire protection services or to arrange for an optional subscription for services that prevents or controls a fire occurring within the limits of the Zone 2.