

SB 404 -2 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Education

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Meeting Dates: 3/15, 3/22

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires Oregon State University Extension Service to create and maintain organic agriculture specialist positions. Prohibits Oregon Health Authority from removing organic food products from approved foods list for Women, Infants and Children Program. Directs Oregon Business Development Department to establish a grant program to facilitate organic food production infrastructure and specifies requirements. Directs Oregon Business Development Department to conduct a market analysis of Oregon organic market. Directs State Department of Agriculture to promote organic agriculture through Buy Oregon Agriculture program. Requires State Department of Agriculture to establish organics program area and specifies requirements. Establishes Organic Action Plan Task Force and specifies requirements.

REVENUE: No revenue impact

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

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Characteristics of organic farming
- Market trends in Oregon's organic sector
- Role of Oregon State University Extension Service
- Transition from conventional to organic agriculture
- Potential fiscal impact of proposed legislation

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-2 Replaces measure. Requires Oregon State University Extension Service to hire five additional organic specialists to expand the Center for Small Farms and Community Food Systems by June 30, 2023. Prohibits Oregon Health Authority from removing organic food products from approved foods list for Women, Infants and Children program. Requires Oregon Business Development Department to conduct statewide market analysis of state's organic products sector by June 30, 2023 and specifies requirements. Directs State Department of Agriculture to create certain new full-time positions by June 30, 2023. Takes effect on 91st day following adjournment sine die.

BACKGROUND:

Oregon State University (OSU) offers several local partnership programs through its Extension Service across the state. The OSU Organic Extension Program, operated through the Center for Small Farms and Community Food Systems, is one such program, which partners with local organic farmers by connecting them with specialists and academic researchers. Currently, this program has two specialist positions.

Senate Bill 404 requires Oregon State University to create six new positions and maintain an existing position related to organic agriculture, requires the Oregon Business Development Department to establish an organic food production grant program and conduct a market analysis of the organic agriculture sector; requires the State Department of Agriculture to establish an organics program area and promote Oregon's organic agriculture; prohibits the Oregon Health Authority from removing organic foods from the Women, Infants and Children Program; and establishes the Organic Action Plan Task Force.