

HB 2218 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Labor and Business

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 4/22, 4/29

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires Oregon Business Development Department to study impact of wetlands laws on economic development and to provide results of the study by September 15, 2022. Sunsets on January 2, 2023. Takes effect on 91st day following adjournment sine die.

House vote: Ayes, 48; Excused, 12--Alonso Leon, Bonham, Clem, Dexter, Hayden, Leif, Levy, Nearman, Ruiz, Smith G, Wallan, Zika

Fiscal impact issued; no revenue impact

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Cost of wetland mitigation within the Urban Growth Boundary of several Willamette Valley cities
- Impact of wetland mitigation requirements on local economic development projects

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

"Wetlands" are defined as those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration that are sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. In 1989, the Legislative Assembly assigned the Department of State Lands (DSL) with responsibilities under the Oregon Wetlands Conservation Act. Under the Act, the DSL is responsible for compiling and maintaining a comprehensive Statewide Wetlands Inventory, and for reviewing any wetland conservation plan submitted by a city or county to ensure the plan complies with specified standards. Those standards prohibit a plan from interfering with public health and safety; require protection, conservation and best use of water resources and use of state waters for navigation, fishing and public recreation; and require designation of wetlands for protection, conservation and development consistent with resource functions and values of the area and the capability of the wetland area to withstand alterations and maintain important functions and values. In 1995, the Oregon Division of State Lands released Oregon's Wetlands Conservation Strategy, which included recommendations for continued development of a wetlands mitigation policy that promotes avoidance, compensatory mitigation alternatives, and the use of buffers.

The Oregon Business Development Department (OBDD), more commonly known as "Business Oregon," is the state's economic development agency. Its mission is to invest in Oregon businesses, communities, and people to promote a globally competitive, diverse, and inclusive economy. The overall work of Business Oregon is guided by the nine-member Business Oregon Commission with additional input and expertise provided by several other advisory bodies and boards associated with specific programs, including business finance programs that are backed by lottery dollars for direct loan and loan guarantees.

House Bill 2218-A requires Business Oregon to study the impact of laws related to wetlands on economic development, and to report the results of the study to interim committees of the Legislative Assembly by September 15, 2022.