

HB 2357 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Agriculture and Natural Resources

Action Date: 03/25/21

Action: Do pass with amendments and be referred to Revenue by prior reference. (Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 6-3-1-0

Yeas: 6 - Hudson, Marsh, McLain, Reardon, Williams, Witt

Nays: 3 - Breese-Iverson, Cate, Smith DB

Exc: 1 - Post

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: Revenue impact issued

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Meeting Dates: 3/2, 3/25

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs State Forestry Department (Department), with other state agencies, to develop and apply sound forestry practices to promote forest health, incorporate regulation or monitoring of pesticide use in forests, employ adaptive resource management, advance climate science or climate policy related to forest management, and undertake projects that further such purposes. Directs Department to: provide support for any committee created by State Board of Forestry (Board) to serve owners of small forestlands; aid owners of small forestlands in understanding Oregon Forest Practices Act and implementing sustainable forestry methods; and conduct education initiatives for owners of small forestlands. Transfers responsibility to establish annual privilege tax rate to Board from Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI). Establishes Sound Forestry Practices Subaccount and the Family Forestlands Subaccount under the State Forestry Department Account and continuously appropriates funds to Department for specified purposes. Changes allocation of revenue from privilege tax to be deposited as follows: 50 percent to Sound Forestry Practices Subaccount, 33 percent to OFRI Fund, and 17 percent to Family Forestlands Subaccount. Changes membership and adjusts qualifications of OFRI board of directors by increasing voting members from 11 to 13 to include one member who represents the environmental community and one member who has experience with a fishery or wildlife-related science. Prohibits OFRI from expending funds on: generalized advertising for public education related to forest practices, including the adequacy or effectiveness of any particular forest practice; and educational materials, trainings, tours, or other outreach that does not include a conservation perspective. Requires OFRI maintain records of interactions between institute staff and elected officials, members of boards and commissions, and senior agency employees; present report summarizing these records to the Governor no later than January 15 of each year; and make report available to the public on OFRI's website.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Sources of funding for Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI)
- Roles and requirements of OFRI board members
- History of OFRI's past involvement with academic studies

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Directs State Forestry Department (Department) to: provide support for any committee created by State Board of Forestry (Board) to serve owners of small forestlands; aid owners of small forestlands in understanding Oregon Forest Practices Act and implementing sustainable forestry methods; and conduct education initiatives for owners of small forestlands. Transfers responsibility to establish annual privilege tax rate to Board from Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI). Establishes Sound Forestry Practices Subaccount and the Family Forestlands

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Subaccount under the State Forestry Department Account and changes allocation of credit revenue from privilege tax to be credited to Department and deposited as follows: 50 percent to Sound Forestry Practices Subaccount, 33 percent to OFRI, and 17 percent to Family Forestlands Subaccount. Changes membership and adjusts qualifications of OFRI board of directors by increasing voting members from 11 to 13 by adding one member who represents the environmental community and one member who has experience with a fishery or wildlife-related science. Prohibits OFRI from expending funds on: generalized advertising for public education related to forest practices, including the adequacy or effectiveness of any particular forest practice; and educational materials, trainings, tours, or other outreach that does not include a conservation perspective. Requires OFRI maintain records of interactions between institute staff and elected officials, members of boards and commissions, and senior agency employees; present report summarizing these records to the Governor no later than January 15 of each year; and make report available to the public on OFRI's website.

BACKGROUND:

In 1991, the Oregon Legislative Assembly established the Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) to enhance collaboration among forest agencies and individuals, improve public understanding of the state's forest resources, and encourage environmentally sound forest practices. OFRI is governed by a board of directors who establish an annual privilege tax rate and is funded by revenue from the privilege tax.

House Bill 2357 A would transfer authority to set a privilege tax rate from OFRI to the Board of Forestry, add two voting members to the OFRI board of directors, and prohibit the use of privilege tax revenue for specified purposes.