

OREGON LANDSCAPE CONTRACTORS BOARD

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MEMORANDUM

To: Chair Holvey, Vice Chairs Bonham and Grayber, and Business and Labor Committee Members

From: Elizabeth Boxall, Administrator

Date: April 21, 2021

Subject: Senate Bill 94

Summary: Under ORS 671.561 the Landscape Contractors Board is required to provide a hands-on practical skills exam in English and Spanish. The proposed change in senate bill 94 would allow for a practical skill exam to be administered electronically. There is no fiscal impact and no known opposition.

Background: Since the inception of the practical skills exam in 2016, the Landscape Contractors Board has leveraged a portion of a national hands-on certification exam toward licensure. This hands-on exam was administered outdoors in Portland, OR, once per year and candidates could participate in testing toward only a partial phase of license – planting-only or irrigation-only.

The national exam owners discontinued the hands-on exam and converted it to an electronic format. The new format continues to test on knowledge and skill over the ability to read and write, remaining practical skills focused. As an example, candidates are shown videos for which they must identify sequencing of steps in a process or match names to an image by dragging and dropping. The electronic format is available in English and Spanish.

The new electronic exam format offers better accessibility since it can be taken from any computer with a web camera year-round. It also adds the ability to obtain a standard license and offers better affordability for candidates. The pandemic has only highlighted the need for additional testing options for this exam type and we look forward to the opportunities this will provide those interested in becoming licensed.

The A engrossed version of the bill demonstrates that the intent is to add an electronic format to the practical skills exam. The bill also maintains the hands-on format as an option, but not a requirement, should circumstances shift and it becomes a viable option in the future.