

FISCAL IMPACT OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

81st Oregon Legislative Assembly – 2022 Regular Session
Legislative Fiscal Office

Measure: HB 4087 - 4

*Only Impacts on Original or Engrossed
Versions are Considered Official*

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Measure Description:

Requires, on or after January 1, 2023, officials of public bodies to grant news media representatives access to scenes of wildfires or natural disasters on public lands that are otherwise closed to public.

Government Unit(s) Affected:

Department of Forestry (ODF), Oregon Department of Emergency Management, Oregon State Police (OSP), Oregon Military Department (OMD)

Summary of Fiscal Impact:

Costs related to the measure are indeterminate at this time - See explanatory analysis.

Analysis:

This measure requires officials of public bodies to grant credentialed or documented representatives of news media organizations access to scenes of wildfires or natural disasters on public lands that are otherwise closed to the public; on or after January 1, 2023. This measure provides exceptions when access may be denied or limits to news media representatives who have received basic fire and natural disaster site safety training approved by associations representing professional news media and public safety agencies. Upon passage, this measure will authorize on-site scene commanders or designees to grant unescorted access to scenes of wildfires or natural disasters to news media representatives at their own risk and without promise of rescue.

This measure directs the Department of State Police (OSP) to provide guidelines for basic fire and natural disaster site training for news media representatives and other specified topics. News media representatives are required to provide and carry their own appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) on scene and public bodies, or public employees may not be held liable for injury or death of a news media representatives after the representative has entered the scene. The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), OSP and any other state agency with responsibility for wildfire or natural disaster may provide technical assistance to professional or trade associations representing news media for the purpose of facilitating safety education.

The OSP shall convene a committee of news media representatives and public safety agency stakeholders to develop voluntary guidelines for training, circumstances for denying access, and when PPE is required. This measure becomes effective January 1, 2023 and declares emergency, effective on passage.

OSP and ODF report that the fiscal impact is indeterminate. Both agencies note that the measure does not provide guidelines for convening of the committee, number or location of meetings, and provides no sunset date beyond the required report.

There is no fiscal impact for OMD or Oregon Department of Emergency Management.