

HB 2986 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 1/25

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) to establish by rule a Prescribed Fire Capacity Grant Program to 1) increase the pace and scale of the use of prescribed fire and cultural burning and 2) reduce barriers for conducting prescribed fires and cultural burning. Authorizes ODF to award grants that support workforce development; add capacity to conduct prescribed fires; and assist local governments and nongovernmental organizations with funding equipment and personnel that are needed for conducting prescribed fires. Requires ODF, in implementing the program, to collaborate with other relevant state agencies, cultural fire practitioners, the Oregon Prescribed Fire Council, and Certified Burn Managers to establish guidelines governing the program and requirements for grantee reporting and implementation of grant-funded projects. Establishes Prescribed Fire Capacity Fund in State Treasury, separate and distinct from General Fund, to fund program. Appropriates \$5,000,000 to ODF out of General Fund for deposit into Prescribed Fire Capacity Fund. Sunsets Prescribed Fire Capacity Grant Program and Prescribed Fire Capacity Fund January 2, 2029. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

- *Fiscal: May have fiscal impact, no statement yet issued*
- *Revenue: May have revenue impact, no statement yet issued*

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The U.S. Forest Service describes prescribed fires, also known as prescribed burns or controlled burns, as the "controlled application of fire by a team of fire experts under specified weather conditions to restore health to ecosystems that depend on fire." Such fires may be used to reduce the risk of large severe wildfires, increase public and firefighter safety, and to meet a variety of natural resource management objectives including habitat restoration, restoration or maintenance ecosystem health, and maintenance of vegetation treatments.

House Bill 2986 would direct Oregon Department of Forestry to establish by rule Prescribed Fire Capacity Grant Program and establish Prescribed Fire Capacity Fund.