

HB 3142 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

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Meeting Dates: 2/14

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires the Oregon Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to provide grants to soil and water conservation districts and counties for the removal of western juniper. Limits grant uses to removal of western juniper in areas of greatest benefit to water resources and ecological health, to using methods and timing that reduce the risk of repropagation, and to use no more than eight percent of the grant amount to cover administrative expenses. Authorizes grant applicants to consult with governmental or nongovernmental experts, including Oregon State University (OSU), to identify target areas. Requires grant recipients to work with OSU to monitor program effects and provide quarterly and annual reports to DAS, and to work with a local workforce development board to establish a workforce program for the workers involved with juniper removal. Requires DAS to annually report to water-related interim legislative committees by September 15th of each year. Appropriates a total of \$9 million General Fund moneys to DAS and specifies how these grant funds are to be split between soil and water conservation districts located in Crook, Jefferson, Klamath, Deschutes, Harney, Lake, and Wheeler Counties. Appropriates \$800,000 General Fund moneys to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission for distribution to OSU to participate in target area selection and monitoring. Requires DAS to dispense grants no later than July 1st, 2023, or 60 days after the effective date of this Act, whichever is later. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The western juniper (*Juniperus occidentalis*) thrives in arid high desert climate and is widely distributed across central and eastern Oregon. It is a native species to the state and has been estimated to have spread across nine million acres in the past 130 years. Mature junipers can have significant ecological impacts on the landscape by extracting up to 40 gallons of water per day from soil. Since 2005 the Bureau of Land Management has removed western juniper from over 173,000 acres in Oregon at a cost of \$22-\$150 per acre.

House Bill 3142 would appropriate \$9 million General Fund moneys to the Oregon Department of Administrative Services to provide grants to soil and water conservation districts and counties for the removal of western juniper in areas of greatest benefit to water resources and ecological health. House Bill 3142 would further appropriate \$800,000 General Fund moneys to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission for distribution to Oregon State University to support grant applicants and perform program monitoring.