

HB 2484 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

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Meeting Dates: 3/21, 3/23

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs the Department of the State Fire Marshal to coordinate urban search and rescue functions of the state.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Clarification that Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) specifically references structural fires and applies statewide
- Examples of how current USAR functions work locally and statewide
- USAR training and certification needs

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Adds proposed measure to existing statutes regulating search and rescue functions. Directs the Department of the State Fire Marshal to study the needs of the state related to urban search and rescue functions and submit a report on recommendations to the Legislative Assembly no later than September 15, 2024. Repeals the study and report requirements on January 2, 2025.

FIS: Fiscal statement issued for measure w/the -1 amendment

RIS: No revenue impact for measure w/the -1 amendment

BACKGROUND:

Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) provides highly trained personnel and specialized equipment for response to large scale catastrophic events and structural collapse. After the events of September 11, 2001, a federal grant program provided funding for Oregon to develop a USAR Task Force. The task force, comprised of eight regional teams, was coordinated through Office of Emergency Management and the Office of the State Fire Marshal. Federal funding for the program was discontinued in 2008 and several USAR teams disbanded. Currently there is no official USAR Task Force in Oregon. Realizing the ongoing need for additional preparation in the event of a large-scale disaster, the Office of the State Fire Marshal continues to coordinate USAR response efforts statewide. This multi-agency effort includes the Oregon Department of Transportation, the Oregon Army National Guard and fire service providers.

House Bill 2484, as amended by the -1 amendment, adds additional discretionary powers to the Department of the State Fire Marshal, including the specific authority to coordinate urban search and rescue functions of the state. It requires the Department to study the needs of the state related to urban search and rescue functions and submit a report and testify on recommendations to the Legislative Assembly.