

HB 2522 -4 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

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Meeting Dates: 3/21, 3/28

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires the governing body of a county that contains at-risk land to develop or solicit proposals for fire response or wildfire response plans. Takes effect on the 91st day following adjournment sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Clarification that this work will be focused on community based structural fire response in rural areas
- Concerns about population density in rural areas that are outside rural fire protection districts
- Tax and funding structures for rural fire districts

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-4 Replaces original measure. Requires the State Fire Marshal establish and appoint the Rural Structure Fire Protection Review Committee. Requires the committee to conduct a comprehensive review of statutes, but not including forestland assessment, field burning or consultation with the State Forestry Department, and develop recommendations to modernize and improve operations. Requires committee submit recommendations to a committee or interim committee of the Legislative Assembly on or before September 15, 2024. Declares emergency, takes effect on passage and sunsets January 2, 2025.

FIS: Minimal fiscal impact on measure w/the -4 amendment

RIS: No revenue impact on measure w/the -4 amendment

BACKGROUND:

The need for rural fire protection in Oregon was contemplated as early as 1939 by the Legislative Assembly with the creation of Rural Fire Protection Districts (RFPD). RFPDs are a defined area, typically located outside of incorporated cities, which are organized for the purpose of providing fire protection to the inhabitants and property within the district. There are currently 123 RFPDs statewide.

House Bill 2522 as amended by the -2 amendment, creates a RFPD Review Committee and requires the State Fire Marshall to appoint members to this committee as soon as practical. The committee will comprehensively review ORS Chapter 478 statutes governing RFPD's and develop recommendations to modernize and improve their operations. The committee will send a recommendations report to a committee or interim committee of the Legislative Assembly on or before September 15, 2024.