

SB 852 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Action Date: 03/07/23

Action: Do pass and requesting referral to Ways and Means.

Vote: 5-0-0-0

Yeas: 5 - Findley, Golden, Hayden, Lieber, Sollman

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 2/21, 3/7

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Oregon Department of Energy to establish program to provide assistance to environmental justice communities related to energy projects and activities. Stipulates that at a minimum the program must provide environmental justice communities with information regarding funding resources, technical assistance, and other support that may be available.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Examples of eligible entities
- Definition of "environmental justice communities"
- Opportunities for available federal funding

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

An environmental justice community, as defined by ORS 469A.400, "includes communities of color, communities experiencing lower incomes, tribal communities, rural communities, coastal communities, communities with limited infrastructure and other communities traditionally underrepresented in public processes and adversely harmed by environmental and health hazards, including seniors, youth and persons with disabilities."

There are various federal and state programs that direct the prioritization of projects in environmental justice communities. In 2021, the President signed Executive Order 14008 which included the "Justice40 Initiative" which is a federal government effort to deliver at least 40 percent of the overall benefits from certain federal investments to disadvantaged communities. Congress recently enacted the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act. Both of these Acts created potential funding sources for various environmental programs.

Senate Bill 852 would direct the Oregon Department of Energy to establish a program to provide assistance related to energy projects and activities to environmental justice communities.