

HB 2522 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Rep. Marsh

House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

Action Date: 03/28/23

Action: Do pass with amendments. (Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 6-0-1-0

Yeas: 6 - Conrad, Evans, Grayber, Hieb, Lewis, Tran

Exc: 1 - Dexter

Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 3/21, 3/28

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires the State Fire Marshal establish and appoint the Rural Structural Fire Protection Review Committee. Requires the committee to conduct a comprehensive review of statutes, not including specified provisions related to forestland assessment, field burning, or consultation with the State Forestry Department, and develop recommendations to modernize and improve operations of rural fire protection districts and to make the operations more efficient. Requires committee submit recommendations to a committee or interim committee of the Legislative Assembly on or before September 15, 2024. Sunsets January 2, 2025. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

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:

Replaces the measure.

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 A directs the State Fire Marshal to create a Rural Structural Fire Protection Review Committee and requires the State Fire Marshal to appoint members to this committee as soon as practical. The committee is directed to comprehensively review ORS chapter 478 statutes governing RFPDs and develop recommendations to modernize and improve their operations and to submit a recommendations report to a committee or interim committee of the Legislative Assembly on or before September 15, 2024.