

HB 4014 -1, -2 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 2/5, 2/14

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure implements a Landowners Living with Beavers Grant Program through grant awards, technical assistance, and fund administration and appropriates \$1.5 million for the Program.

Subsequent referral to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Detailed Summary:

Makes legislative findings. Implements a **Landowners Living with Beavers Grant Program** (Program) in the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund (OCRF). Allows the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission), on recommendations from the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee (Committee), to expend OCRF moneys to undertake activities related to the Program, including:

- **Awarding grants** of not more than \$50,000 to eligible applicants for certain projects on private land that quickly and efficiently mitigate the effects of beavers that live on, or regularly visit, the private land;
- **Providing statewide technical assistance** to develop and expand skills and strategies for coexisting with beavers; and
- **Authorizing and administering grant expenditures.**

Directs the Committee to make recommendations to the Commission and ODFW on expenditures under the Program. Requires the ODFW and the Committee to jointly submit a report on or before September 15, 2026, to the committees or interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to the environment on the expenditures of moneys under the Program. Appropriates \$1,500,000 from the General Fund to the ODFW for the biennium ending June 30, 2025, for deposit in the OCRF for purposes related to the Program. Permits up to \$40,000 of the appropriated amount to be used for the costs of administering the grant program. Takes effect on 91st day following adjournment sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Beaver damage mitigation strategies
- Land use changes allowed under Private Forest Accord
- Oversight and management of funded projects
- Potential benefits of beaver habitat
- Application process for Landowners Living with Beavers Grant Program

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 The amendment, on June 30, 2029: **sunset**s the Landowners Living with Beavers Grant Program (Program); **removes** the direction to the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee to make recommendations to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife on expenditures under the Program; and **transfers** all moneys appropriated for purposes related to the Program to the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund to be used for purposes specified in ORS 496.252.

-2 The amendment, on June 30, 2029: **sunset**s the Landowners Living with Beavers Grant Program (Program); **removes** the direction to the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee to make

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recommendations to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife on expenditures under the Program; and stipulates that all **unexpended and unobligated moneys appropriated for the Program remain** in the Program to the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund to be used for purposes specified in ORS 496.252.

- *FISCAL: Has fiscal impact*
- *REVENUE: No revenue impact*

BACKGROUND:

In 2019, the Oregon Legislative Assembly passed House Bill 2829 establishing the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund (OCRF). According to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, which carries out activities funded by OCRF, the fund “is a way for Oregonians to support projects that protect and enhance the species and habitats identified in the Oregon Conservation Strategy and create new opportunities for wildlife watching, urban conservation, community science, and other wildlife-associated recreation.”

Prior to 2023, beavers causing damage on private property were defined as predatory animals and rodents under animal laws administered by the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), and unlimited taking of beaver on private land without a permit was allowed. House Bill 3464 (2023) removed beavers from the statutory definition of "predatory animal," and allowed for killing beaver only by permit, with exceptions for threats to infrastructure or crops and for certain small forestland owners.