

HB 4016 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire

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Meeting Dates: 2/27, 2/29

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure modifies the Prescribed Fire Liability Pilot Program, extends the deadline for the Fire Hardening Grant Program to December 31, 2025, and modifies terminology for an existing smoke monitoring program.

FISCAL: Has minimal fiscal impact

REVENUE: No revenue impact

HOUSE VOTE: Ayes, 54; Nays, 0

Detailed Summary:

Prescribed Fire Liability Pilot Program

Directs Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS) to reimburse claims under the Prescribed Fire Liability Pilot Program (Program) that meet certain criteria related to the use of prescribed fire and cultural burning. Authorizes DCBS to reimburse a claim under the Program only if the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) certifies that the claim meets the specified criteria. Limits the amount paid from the Prescribed Fire Claims Fund to a maximum of \$1 million per claim for losses arising from a prescribed fire or cultural burn.

Fire Hardening Grant Program

Extends the deadline to apply for the Fire Hardening Grant Program from June 30, 2025 to December 31, 2025. Requires DCBS and the Oregon State Fire Marshal to report to natural resources-related committees of the Legislative Assembly by September 15, 2024 on a proposal for a proactive home hardening program.

Health Systems for Smoke

Replaces "particulate matter" and "poor air quality" terminology with "smoke events" and "smoke impacts" for a program to support community monitoring of air quality conditions caused by smoke (ORS 468A.836).

Takes effect on the 91st day following adjournment sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

In 2021, the Legislative Assembly enacted Senate Bill 762, a wide-ranging wildfire law that invested in dozens of programs and initiatives that aligned with three key strategies: creating fire-adapted communities, increasing the resiliency of Oregon's landscapes, and developing safer and more effective wildfire response. Almost \$6.3 million dollars were appropriated to the Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS) for a Fire Hardening Grant Program to incentivize fire hardening improvements for certain buildings damaged or destroyed by 2020 or 2021 wildfires.

Senate Bill 80 (2023) modified various wildfire provisions from SB 762, including:

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- allowing nonprofits and faith-based organizations to establish emergency spaces for cleaner air, warming, or cooling under a Department of Human Services (DHS) grant program, and clarifying that DHS's support for entities operating and planning cleaner air, warming, or cooling spaces includes the provision of technical expertise, equipment, staff assistance, training, and general assistance;
- establishing the Landscape Resiliency Fund to continuously appropriate moneys to the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) for landscape resilience projects;
- authorizing the Landscape Resiliency Fund and the Community Risk Reduction Fund to receive gifts, grants, donations, endowments, or bequests from any public or private sources;
- allowing financial assistance to be provided to members of socially and economically vulnerable communities for defensible space efforts on land where they reside, rather than land that they own; and
- creating a Prescribed Fire Liability Pilot Program administered by ODF, with claims reimbursements administered by DCBS.