

SB 1553 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Judiciary

Action Date: 02/29/24

Action: Without recommendation as to passage and be referred to Rules.

Vote: 10-0-0-0

Yeas: 10 - Andersen, Bynum, Chaichi, Conrad, Kropf, Lewis, Reynolds, Tran, Wallan, Yunker

Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact

Revenue: Has minimal revenue impact

Prepared By: Gillian Fischer, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 2/27, 2/29

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Expands the crime of interfering with public transportation to include when a person, while in or on a public transit vehicle or public transit station, knowingly consumes a controlled substance that is not lawfully possessed by the person. Provides that a conviction for interfering with public transportation established by this measure shall be classified as a designated drug-related misdemeanor.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Importance of safe public transportation for businesses, youths, persons with disabilities, and visitors to Portland
- Incidents of drug use and drug induced behavior on public transit
- Investments by Tri-Met towards safety and security have doubled
- Obligation to provide safe and clean work environment for public transit employees
- Open drug use at stations and on transit is reportedly responsible for a decrease in ridership
- Expansiveness of what is covered by public transit station broader than necessary to accomplish intent of bill

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Under current Oregon law, it is a Class C misdemeanor crime to interfere with public transportation by engaging in a variety of conduct, specified in ORS 166.116. The behavior constituting criminal interference includes entering or remaining unlawfully on public transit vehicles or at public transit stations; interfering with the movement of, or access to, public transit vehicles; engaging in disorderly conduct on public transit vehicles or at public transit stations; and subjecting public transport passengers or employees to offensive physical contact.

The Department of Corrections, under ORS 423.478, is responsible for community-based supervision, sanctions, and services for offenders convicted of certain crimes, including those designated as drug-related misdemeanors by statute. Currently, the crimes listed in statute as designated drug-related misdemeanors involve the unlawful possession of a controlled substance.