

SB 208 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire

Action Date: 03/04/25

Action: Do pass and refer to Ways and Means by prior reference.

Vote: 5-0-0-0

Yeas: 5 - Girod, Golden, Nash, Prozanski, Taylor

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 2/20, 3/4

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure directs the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), in partnership with Oregon State University (OSU), to study the potential for reducing methane emissions by developing livestock feed through commercial seaweed production. It appropriates \$250,000 of General Fund moneys to Oregon State University for research purposes. ODA is required to present the study to an appropriate committee of the Legislative Assembly by September 15, 2027. Declares emergency, effective upon passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- \$1 million U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) grant to OSU
- Australian seaweed benefits
- Oregon seaweed benefits

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

According to the College of Agriculture and Environmental Science at University of California, Davis, methane is a potent greenhouse gas with a warming potential of more than 28 times that of carbon dioxide. The livestock industry contributes to methane emissions regularly through

- livestock digestive processes,
- fertilizer manufacturing,
- feed production,
- land-use changes (e.g., converting forests to pastures to grazing land), and
- energy use for farm inputs as well as during slaughter and processing.

Global greenhouse gas emissions attributable to the livestock industry range from 11.1 to 19.6 percent.

Researchers at University of California, Davis, have studied a potential method for reducing methane emissions from livestock by creating cattle feed from red seaweeds called *asparagopsis armata* and *asparagopsis taxiformis*. This practice has been shown to reduce by more than 20 percent the methane emissions from cows and beef cattle that were fed the algae as part of their diet.