

SB 82 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire

Action Date: 03/20/25

Action: Do pass with amendments. Refer to Ways and Means by prior reference. (Printed A-Eng).

Vote: 5-0-0-0

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

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

Prepared By: Alexa Piscanio, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 3/4, 3/20

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure modifies consultations that are required for a grant process that supports work conducted by the Oregon Conservation Corps Program (OCC Program). It appropriates funding for grant-supported projects related to the OCC Program. The measure declares an emergency, effective on passage.

Detailed Summary:

Adds the Department of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) to the agencies the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) must consult with to ensure that the grant process supporting Oregon Conservation Corps (OCC) work aligns with OSFM goals. Requires the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) to consult with OSFM to ensure wildfire risk reduction projects protecting at-risk communities in the wildland-urban interface involving the OCC Program are consistent with OSFM objectives. Removes definition of “Tribe” as a federally recognized Tribe in Oregon.

Removes requirement that HECC use the OCC Fund as directed by the Oregon Youth Works Advisory Board and instead directs that the funds be used for purposes related to OCC Program. Appropriates \$10 million dollars from the General Fund to HECC for deposit in the OCC Fund. Appropriates an additional \$5 million dollars from the General Fund to match dollar-for-dollar funds secured from sources other than state government to support OCC projects. Declares an emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- SB 762 (2021) challenges
- United States Forest Service reducing seasonal wildfire workforce
- Oregon Conservation Corps (OCC) benefits for rural and Tribal communities
- OCC wildfire mitigation
- Skills learned in OCC
- Service to land and people
- Invasive species mitigation work
- Fuels management

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

The amendment appropriates funding to HECC for deposit in the OCC Fund for grant-supported projects related to the OCC Program. It removes the requirement that the HECC use the OCC Fund as directed by the Oregon Youth Works Advisory Board and instead directs that the funds be used for purposes related to OCC Program.

BACKGROUND:

OORS 477.503 requires the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) to design and implement a program to reduce wildfire risks through landscape restoration and hazardous fuel reduction on public and private lands and nearby communities. The program must prioritize strategic landscapes; collaborate with various stakeholders; and ensure

This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.

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projects focus on protecting human life, property, and critical infrastructure. ODF is required to develop a 20-year strategic plan with ongoing risk-reduction support projects that involve the Oregon Conservation Corps Program (OCC Program) as much as possible.

The OCC Program was established in 2021 to reduce wildfire risks, create fire-adapted communities, and provide workforce training for youth and young adults aged 16 to 26. The OCC Advisory Committee, in collaboration with the Oregon Youth Works Advisory Board and qualified nonprofits, seeks private donations to support the OCC Program. It advises the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) on implementing a grant process to fund eligible organizations, prioritizing projects that reduce fire risks, promote youth workforce development, and reduce hazardous fuels. The committee also ensures that grant proposals protect at-risk communities, meet fuel treatment standards, and reports biennially on the fund's expenditures.