

SCR 204 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Rules

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Meeting Dates: 2/4

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure recognizes, honors, and celebrates the contributions and value of the Association of Oregon Counties on the 120th anniversary of its founding, and encourages a continued collaboration between the Legislative Assembly and county partners.

Fiscal impact: No impact

Revenue impact: No impact

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

In 1906, Oregon county governments formed the State Association of County Judges and Commissioners to support and represent Oregon's counties in legislative matters, which in 1936 evolved into the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC). The AOC is composed of the 36 Oregon counties, and their elected commissioners, judges, and chairs, who work to foster nonpartisan, consensus-based policies, and build solutions-oriented partnerships with the state to guarantee effective service delivery. For 120 years, the AOC has played a pivotal role in protecting, enhancing and empowering the ability of Oregon's counties to provide essential public services and effectively address community needs and priorities through legislative advocacy, professional development, promotion of best practices, and fostering collaboration among elected officials.

Oregon's counties administer all local, state and federal elections, maintain the property tax system, operate libraries, provide social safety net services, administer local public and community mental health programs, workforce services, and county Veteran Services Offices. They also provide county public safety functions, support public infrastructure, and facilitate development to ensure community growth and the preservation of natural resources.

AOC Advocacy Efforts

In the 1930s, the AOC supported the passage of early federal "Payment in Lieu of Taxes" legislation. In 1947, it championed the first county planning law, and the 1973 Land Conservation and Development Act, which made planning and development regulation mandatory. In the 1950s, it advocated for a property appraisal program that reduced inequities in Oregon's property tax system. In 1961, it sponsored legislation delegating to counties the power to convert to the Board of County Commissioner system if the county judge no longer had any judicial functions. Also in 1961, it worked to expand state shared revenues of net liquor receipts with counties. That initiative expanded to cigarette tax revenues in 1965, and lottery revenues in 1991.

From 1963 to 1966, the AOC secured double federal appropriations for National Forest road construction. In 1964, the AOC generated Oregon's first county roads inventory and needs study. In 1976, the AOC's support was crucial to the passage of the National Forest Management Act. In 1987, the AOC created the Forest Trust Land Advisory Committee, composed of forest trust land county commissioners who provided input on the management of

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

Oregon forests to the State Board of Forestry and the State Forester. In 1989, the AOC assisted with the creation of the County Assessment Function Funding Assistance Account, which was a crucial service benefiting all local taxing districts and the public.

In 1990, the AOC created and maintained the Integrated Road Information System, which played a critical role in county public asset management. In 2000, it advocated in Congress for the passage of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act to stabilize revenue to counties that previously relied on fluctuating timber revenues. In 2014, it helped create the Regional Solutions Program. In 2024, it partnered with state and local public safety agencies to form a new deflection model for people suffering from substance use disorder.

For the last two decades, the AOC has played a key role in passing state and federal legislation to bolster intergovernmental partnership and deliver efficient and effective public services, including major shared revenue-based state transportation packages that have kept the traveling public moving and safe.