

HB 4102 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

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Meeting Dates: 2/3, 2/5

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure modifies how the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and any applicant, permittee, or regulated entity may enter into an agreement to take certain actions, effective January 1, 2027.

Detailed summary:

Allows DEQ to spend moneys received under the agreements for hiring additional staff, including limited duration employees, for the purpose of expediting or enhancing the regulatory process. Requires DEQ, before hiring additional staff or contracting with a third party to provide services, to evaluate opportunities to perform the services with existing staff. Allows an applicant, permittee, or regulated entity to request that DEQ enter into an agreement for hiring additional staff. Requires DEQ to evaluate whether the expedited or enhanced regulatory process is in the public interest by considering certain factors about the request. Establishes actions DEQ must take no longer than 45 business days after receiving a written request to enter into an agreement with requestors. Requires DEQ to make certain information available on the agency's website. Removes requirement that DEQ must identify agency activities suitable for contracting out to third parties. Establishes conditions under which DEQ must enter into an agreement with an applicant, permittee, or regulated entity. Takes effect on the 91st day following adjournment sine die.

- *FISCAL: Has fiscal impact*
- *REVENUE: No revenue impact*

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Potential reductions of permit backlog
- Business opportunities and challenges in Oregon
- Processes Oregon Department of Environmental Quality use to hire contractors

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The mission of the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is "is to be a leader in restoring, maintaining and enhancing the quality of Oregon's air, land and water." The five-member Environmental Quality Commission oversees DEQ and sets the agency's policies and rules.

Currently, in ORS 468.073, DEQ has the authority to enter into an agreement with any applicant, permittee, or regulated entity to set a schedule of payments to DEQ for the purpose of enabling DEQ to expedite or enhance a regulatory process by contracting for services, hiring additional staff, or covering costs of activities not otherwise provided during the ordinary course of agency business.