

HB 4159 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Rules

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Meeting Dates: 2/17, 2/19

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure requires the governor to appoint one member of the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (OGE) who has local government experience. It also maintains the attorney-client privilege for information provided to OGE regarding a complaint alleging a violation of government ethics or public meetings laws.

Fiscal impact: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued

Revenue impact: No revenue impact

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Oregon Government Ethics Commission consists of nine members. The Governor appoints eight members from recommendations by the leadership of the Democratic and Republican parties in each house of the Legislative Assembly (two each), and one member without leadership recommendation. These appointments are subject to Senate confirmation.

In October 2025, Rep. Nathan Sosa convened a workgroup to address concerns about recent guidance and opinions from OGE. Representatives from cities, counties, special districts, education associations, media, and OGE met with a group of House and Senate members from October 2025 to January 2026. The group identified areas of concerns, discussed proposed language, and developed a set of recommendations around public meetings law enforcement, serial communications, maintaining confidentiality of protected information, training requirements, OGE membership, and the provision of food and beverages to a public official by their public body.

House Bill 4159 contains the group's recommendations around OGE membership and maintaining attorney-client privilege for information provided to OGE in a complaint investigation. House Bill 4161 contains the recommendations related to the provision of food, beverages, and certain merchandise to a public official from a public body. House Bill 4177 contains the recommendations around public meetings law, including serial communications, training, and enforcement.