

HB 4159 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Rules

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Meeting Dates: 2/27

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

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

Fiscal impact: No impact

Revenue impact: No impact

HOUSE VOTE: Ayes, 49; Nays, 2

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

OGEC consists of nine members: the governor appoints eight from recommendations by the leadership of the Democratic and Republican parties in each house of the legislature (two per chamber caucus), and one member without leadership recommendation. These appointments are subject to Senate confirmation.

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

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