HB 2516   STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

Prepared By:	Beth Patrino, LPRO Analyst
Meeting Dates:	5/8, 5/11

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Authorizes State Parks and Recreation Department (Department) to issue permits to entities to restore, maintain and preserve abandoned cemeteries. Defines "abandoned cemetery" as cemetery in which no remains have been interred in last five years and which has no known owner, deceased owner or was owned by entity no longer in existence. Allows Department to establish application process and other rules related to permits. Allows permitted entity to take custody of cemetery documents for purpose of restoration and preservation of documents and allows entity to establish fund to collect donations for restoration, maintenance and preservation of cemetery. Prohibits permitted entity from interring remains. Limits liability of permitted entity and revokes permit upon dissolution of entity. Authorizes governing body of municipal corporation to hold public hearing regarding abandoned or deteriorated and neglected cemetery within municipal boundaries, subject to restrictions and public notice requirements. Sets effective date for permit program and public hearing changes to January 1, 2018.

Minimal fiscal impact, no revenue impact

House Vote: Passed. Ayes, 50; Nays, 9--Greenlick, Hayden, Heard, Huffman, Nearman, Post, Reschke, Stark, Wilson; Excused, 1--Smith G

ISSUES DISCUSSED:
- Cost to local governments to maintain abandoned cemeteries
- Creating opportunity for individuals and groups to maintain cemeteries

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

There are 1,250 known historic cemeteries in the state of Oregon, many of which have unclear status in regards to ownership and responsibility for maintenance.

House Bill 2516 would establish a permitting process to allow entities to carry out activities to restore, maintain and preserve cemeteries that do not have a known owner, whose previous owner is deceased, or whose owner was an entity no longer in existence.