

HB 4118 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Agriculture and Natural Resources

Action Date: 02/15/18

Action: Do pass with amendments, rescind subsequent referral to Legislative Audits, and be referred to Ways and Means. (Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 9-0-0-0

Yeas: 9 - Barreto, Clem, Esquivel, McKeown, McLain, Salinas, Smith DB, Sprenger, Witt

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Defines terms including 'additive' activities, 'federal land management agencies,' 'forest, rangeland, and water restoration services,' and 'Good Neighbor Authority Agreement ' (Agreement). Declares it is the policy of the state to pursue projects under the Agreement that increase timber harvest volume, contribute to job creation, reduce wildfire risks to all lands, improve wildlife habitat and watershed health, and stimulate local economies. Requires the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to work with federal land management agencies to give priority to projects that consist of additive activities, maximize economic benefit to Oregon, and recover state agency costs of project implementation. Requires the Governor and Portland State University Oregon Solutions Federal Forest Working Group to jointly develop specific recommendations regarding Agreement goals, and to report the recommendations to the Legislative Assembly by March 1, 2019. Allocates \$500,000 of lottery funds to ODF for supporting the development, planning, or implementation of priority projects on federal forestland under the Agreement. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Good Neighbor Authority Agreement
- 60 percent of forests in Oregon are federally owned
- Forest health and economic benefit for Oregon
- Development of local project-level agreements

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Replaces the measure.

BACKGROUND:

The Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) allows the United States Forest Service (USFS) to enter into cooperative agreements with states to allow states to perform forest management and watershed restoration services on National Forest System lands. Congress recently passed two laws expanding the GNA: the Fiscal Year 2014 Appropriations Act, which is scheduled to sunset in September 2018, and the 2014 Farm Bill, which gives permanent authority.

A GNA Master Agreement (Agreement) between the State of Oregon and the USFS was signed by the Governor, Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), and USFS Region 6 in March 2016. The Agreement provides formal authorization for putting local projects into action as part of a statewide effort, allowing federal funds to be used by state agency staff or contractors to advance work directly on federal public land and leverage state and other dollars. The Agreement allows the state, USFS, and local partners to work across ownership boundaries to focus on statewide results rather than jurisdictional or regulatory limitations.

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To date, ODF and the USFS have developed six local project-level agreements across Oregon, including: timber and restoration work such as: monitoring, inspections, thinning, logging, and juniper cutting in the Fremont-Winema National Forest; hazardous fuels reduction in the Malheur National Forest; wildland urban interface fuels reduction in the Deschutes National Forest; and thinning and presale layouts in the Mount Hood National Forest. The Paddock Butte project in the Fremont-Winema National Forest is Oregon's first Agreement timber sale. ODF will administer the timber sale and use the revenue to complete future restoration work, including activity fuels treatment, road maintenance and decommissioning, juniper removal, and noxious weed treatment.

ODFW and the USFS have developed eight local project-level agreements to date, including: winter range fire restoration; a white nose syndrome survey; a road decommissioning project and hiring of a wildlife inventory specialist in the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest; mule deer habitat thinning, aspen stand restoration, and fish passage efforts in the Malheur National Forest; and fish passage work in the Umatilla National Forest.

House Bill 4118 A would require ODF and ODFW to work with federal land management agencies to prioritize certain projects, and require the Governor and Portland State University to jointly develop specific recommendations regarding Agreement goals.