

HB 2854 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Energy and Environment

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 2/26

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Establishes Task Force on Measurement and Reporting of Appropriated Water Use (Task Force) to be made up of five volunteer members who are knowledgeable about appropriated water use. Directs Task Force to study the measurement and reporting of appropriated water use and submit a report that may include legislative recommendations to the interim Legislative Assembly by September 15, 2020. Directs the Oregon Water Resources Department to provide staff to the Task Force. Sunsets Task Force December 31, 2020. Takes effect on the 91st day after 2019 sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

By law, all surface and groundwater in Oregon belongs to the public and is to be used for a beneficial purpose without waste. Water users, with some exceptions, must obtain a water right to use water from any source, including rivers, streams, lakes, and groundwater. When water is scarce, water users are allocated water based on the date of their water right, with holders of the oldest water rights allocated water first, and holders of newer water rights receiving their allocation according to the availability of water. Many water rights include conditions that require the water user to submit data to the Oregon Water Resources Department (WRD), including water use reports, pump tests, and in the case of groundwater, static water level data.

House Bill 2854 would establish a Task Force on Measurement and Reporting of Appropriated Water to study the measurement and reporting of appropriated water use in Oregon and report back to the legislature by September 15, 2020.