

SB 756 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 3/5, 3/14

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Appropriates \$2,000,000 to the Department of Environmental Quality to award a grant under ORS 454.779 and to cover administrative costs necessary to implement the same statute. Declares emergency, effective July 1, 2019.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Loan program performance to date
- Failing septic systems can lead to water quality issues, including algal blooms
- Cost of septic system repair or replacement
- Income levels of loan recipients

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

A septic system is the most common method of sewage treatment for homes and businesses that are not connected to an area-wide sewage treatment system. Over 30 percent of Oregonians rely on septic systems to treat wastewater from their homes and businesses. Septic systems which fail or malfunction can pollute Oregon's land and waterways with raw sewage and create public health hazards. In 2016, Senate Bill 1563 required the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to establish a program to award grants for developing and administering a low-interest loan program for the repair, replacement, upgrade, or evaluation of residential or small business on-site septic systems. This program is known as the Clean Water Loan program (ORS 454.779).

Senate Bill 756 would appropriate \$2 million to the Department of Environmental Quality to award a grant under the Clean Water Loan program and to cover administrative costs necessary to implement the program.