

HB 2067 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

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Meeting Dates: 4/18

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Removes sunset dates for the Oregon Landowner Damage Program and the Access and Habitat Program. Takes effect 91st day following adjournment sine die.

Indeterminate fiscal impact; no revenue impact

House vote: Passed. Ayes, 59; Excused, 1--Smith G

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Property damage commonly attributed to elk includes agricultural crop and pasture reduction due to grazing; tree damage due to bark gnawing or seedling pulling; and destruction of fences, gardens, and yards. The Southwest Oregon Landowner Preference Pilot Program was created by the legislature in 2003 to address damage caused by elk on private lands in Jackson, Josephine, Coos, Curry, and Douglas counties by implementing less restrictive landowner preference rules for qualifying landowners in the pilot study area. The program was set to sunset in 2014. In 2013, the legislature expanded the program statewide by creating the Oregon Landowner Damage Program. Currently, the program is required to limit the use of damage tags to taking antlerless elk and can only be used on property owned, leased, or rented by the landowner or by a business entity that includes the landowner as a principal partner or shareholder. The program is scheduled to sunset on January 2, 2020.

The Access and Habitat Program was established in 1993 to fund programs that benefit wildlife resources in Oregon. The law established the Access and Habitat Board (Board), which recommends habitat and access programs and funding to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission. The Board is required to recommend a mix of projects to balance access and habitat benefits, recommend projects that are to be implemented by volunteers, recommend programs that recognize and encourage landowner contributions to wildlife and that minimize economic loss to those landowners, encourage agreements with landowners who request damage control hunts to ensure public access to those hunts, and encourage projects that result in obtaining matching funds from other sources. The program is scheduled to sunset on December 31, 2019.

House Bill 2067 would remove sunset dates for the Oregon Landowner Damage Program and the Access and Habitat Program.