

SB 339 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

Action Date: 03/28/19

Action: Do pass and requesting referral to Ways and Means.

Vote: 4-0-1-0

Yeas: 4 - Bentz, Dembrow, Prozanski, Roblan

Exc: 1 - Olsen

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 3/19, 3/28

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Includes land used primarily for cultivating crops in definition of "rangeland" for purposes of organizing rangeland protection associations and providing fire protection for rangelands.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Rangeland fires last summer
- Fires that start on rangeland may move to lands growing crops
- Another potential tool to suppress fire

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

ORS 477.317 authorizes the State Forester to enter into cooperative agreements with a rangeland protection association (RPA) to assist with organization, training, and acquiring firefighting equipment. The earliest RPA was established in Oregon in 1964, but most began in the 1990s and 2000s. As of 2017, there were 22 RPAs established in eastern Oregon, covering 14 million acres of land. (*Rangeland Fire Protection Associations: An Alternative Model for Wildfire Response, Ecosystem Workforce Program Working Paper Number 80, University of Oregon*).

Senate Bill 339 would Include land used primarily for cultivating crops in the definition of "rangeland" for purposes of organizing rangeland protection associations and providing fire protection for rangelands.