

SB 301 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Sen. Hansell

Senate Committee On Environment and Natural Resources

Action Date: 04/08/19

Action: Do pass with amendments. (Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 5-0-0-0

Yeas: 5 - Bentz, Dembrow, Olsen, Prozanski, Roblan

Fiscal: No fiscal impact

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 3/28, 4/8

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife consider elk overpopulation when implementing the Oregon Landowner Damage Program. Repeals program sunset date of January 2, 2020.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Elk population in Eastern Oregon has doubled since 1980s
- Landowner damage programs
- Changes in forest management have contributed to elk movement to private lands
- Damage caused by elk

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Replaces the measure.

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.

Senate Bill 301-A would require the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to consider elk overpopulation when implementing the Oregon Landowner Damage Program and remove the sunset on the program.