

SB 283 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Education

Action Date: 04/08/19

Action: Without recommendation as to passage, but with amendments and referred to Ways and Means by prior reference. (Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 4-0-1-0

Yeas: 4 - Gelser, Heard, Thomsen, Wagner

Exc: 1 - Hass

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 3/27, 4/8

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to review peer-reviewed, independently funded scientific studies on the health effects of exposure to microwave radiation, including in schools or similar environments. Establishes review requirements. Requires OHA to report the review results to an interim committee of the Legislative Assembly no later than January 2, 2021. Directs ODE to develop recommendations on practices and alternative technologies to reduce students' exposure to microwave radiation, as specified. Appropriates \$10,000 from the General Fund to OHA to carry out the review. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Research studies related to health implications of wireless technology
- Prevalence of wireless technology in society and in school
- Increased rate of disease, including cancer
- Federal standards for exposure limits
- Location of cell towers on school properties
- Financial incentives to use wireless technology
- Commercial insurance exemptions for exposure lawsuits
- School districts' liability for exposure lawsuits
- Children's increased length of exposure
- Children's increased risk due to skull thickness
- Parental awareness and informed consent
- Availability of public schools without wireless technology
- Amending the bill to require OHA to conduct a review of scientific studies

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Replaces measure.

BACKGROUND:

Oregon public schools serve approximately 581,000 students in 197 school districts. Oregon law directs school districts to provide opportunities for students to use technology. Oregon law also requires school districts to develop and adopt a Healthy and Safe Schools Plan. The plan must address environmental conditions at the facilities owned or leased by the district or school where students or staff are present on a regular basis. Senate Bill 283 A directs ODE to inform schools about potential health hazards of using wireless network technology in schools and to provide recommendations for minimizing exposure to possible harmful effects.