

HB 4071 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Water

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 2/4, 2/6

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Authorizes Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to purchase one cyanotoxin analyzer system instrument to analyze water samples and appropriates \$95,000 to DEQ for that purpose. Directs DEQ to create, fill, and utilize at least one seasonal position to collect water samples and to assist with analysis of samples. Appropriates \$115,000 to DEQ for aforementioned seasonal position(s). Directs Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to create, fill, and utilize position of Small Utility Outreach Coordinator to ensure small water suppliers and water suppliers who depend on a water body vulnerable to cyanotoxins have plans, tools, and training needed to respond to harmful algal blooms or other water-related emergencies. Appropriates \$100,000 to OHA for aforementioned position. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Modifies appropriation to DEQ for at least one seasonal position to collect water samples and to assist with analysis of samples to \$215,000.

BACKGROUND:

Harmful algal blooms (HABs) are high concentrations of certain types of algae that produce toxic compounds, known as cyanotoxins. HABs can cause sickness and death in humans, pets, and livestock who come into contact with or drink the water. HABs can also result in hypoxia, or low oxygen, in water bodies, which can kill fish and other wildlife.

Oregon has been experiencing increasing numbers of HABs, including blooms on the North Santiam River that impacted drinking water quality for the City of Salem in 2018. In response, a workgroup made up of stakeholders whose work intersects with drinking water quality or recreational water quality came together in 2019 to consider short term and long term strategies for addressing HABs and related impacts to Oregonians.

House Bill 4071 would appropriate \$95,000 to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for the purchase of a machine to analyze water samples for cyanotoxins. The Act would appropriate an additional \$115,000 to DEQ for staff to collect water samples and assist with analysis. HB 4071 would appropriate \$100,000 to the Oregon Health Authority for a Small Utility Outreach Coordinator to work with small water suppliers and water suppliers who depend on a vulnerable water body to make sure they have plans, tools, and training to address HABs and other water-related emergencies.