

SCR 17 -2 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Energy and Environment

Prepared By: Erin Pischke, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 5/5, 5/19, 5/24

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Declares intent that, through ORS 182.545, in order to provide greater public participation and to ensure that all persons affected by decisions of the natural resource agencies have a voice in those decisions, natural resource agencies are required to: consider the effects of an action on environmental justice issues when making determination; hold hearings at time and place that would be convenient for affected people; engage in public outreach activities in the affected communities; and create a citizen advocate position that applies to state agencies and policy decisions. Resolves that agencies: 1) are responsible to respond to health, environmental, economic and climate crises, and are accountable to build a just, equitable and resilient future; 2) develop guidance for the consideration of environmental justice in implementing their statutory and regulatory responsibilities, including consulting with the Environmental Justice Task Force; 3) make reparative investments in frontline communities and direct resources to policies and processes focused on building certain systems; 4) address environmental pollution; 5) make investments in watershed protection and water infrastructure; and 5) further resolve that a regenerative economy be based on community health protection, respect for traditional ecological knowledge systems and the full and fair participation of Black, Native American, Indigenous and People of Color communities, essential workers, youth, low-income people, and those who are most vulnerable in rural and urban communities.

Senate vote: Ayes, 22; Nays, 7--Boquist, Girod, Heard, Johnson, Linthicum, Robinson, Thomsen; Excused, 1--Thatcher

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Acknowledges state's history and structural inequities
- Supports frontline communities
- Equity and citizen involvement needed in decision-making processes
- Need for a singular definition of environmental justice

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-2 Resolves that state agencies are required to recognize that environmental justice encompasses challenges and solutions that are shared across urban and rural frontline communities work to enact environmental policies that recognize the need to rebuild our communities and provide fair access for all to the full range of resources and build relationships in communities across this state to achieve collaborative solutions.

Has minimal fiscal impact; no revenue impact

BACKGROUND:

In 2007, the Legislative Assembly passed Senate Bill 420, which established the Environmental Justice Task Force. In addition, the 2007 Act directed the natural resource agencies to provide greater public participation and ensure that people affected by natural resource agency decisions had a voice in those decisions. Natural resource agencies were required to: consider the effects of an action on environmental justice issues when making a determination of whether and how to act; hold hearings at a time and place that would be convenient for affected people; engage in public outreach activities in the affected communities; and create a citizen advocate position.

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Senate Concurrent Resolution 17 declares that it is the intent of the Legislative Assembly to apply to all state agencies the duties listed in ORS 182.545 to provide greater public participation and to ensure that all persons affected by decisions of the natural resource agencies have a voice in those decisions.