

FISCAL IMPACT OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

81st Oregon Legislative Assembly – 2021 Regular Session
Legislative Fiscal Office

Measure: HB 2018 - A2

*Only Impacts on Original or Engrossed
Versions are Considered Official*

Prepared by: Matt Stayner
Reviewed by: .
Date: June 14, 2021

Measure Description:

Instructs Water Resources Department to enter into agreement with United States Geological Survey to produce and publish ground water budgets for all major hydrologic basins in this state, contract for person to produce report on statewide consumptive water use, expand ground water level monitoring network, measure progress in estimating and monitoring ground water levels, recharge and use and ensure that department staff members serve as community engagement coordinators.

Government Unit(s) Affected:

Water Resources Department (WRD)

Analysis:

HB 2018 - A directs the Water Resources Department (WRD) to enter into a cost-matching agreement with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) to develop and publish ground water budgets for all major hydrologic basins in Oregon.

WRD is to contract for a peer-reviewed report on statewide consumptive water use that summarizes historical irrigation water use for all irrigated fields, and estimates open water evaporation from all major reservoirs between 1984 and 2020. WRD is also directed to expand the ground water level monitoring network. WRD is to produce reports that quantify ground water recharge for all major hydrologic basins in Oregon; produce maps and datasets that quantify open water evaporation from all major reservoirs in Oregon; collect and process data regarding baseline ground water levels and use; and assess the time and cost to conduct ground water basin studies. WRD staff are directed to serve as community engagement coordinators to help communities provide data and use data collected by the Department. This measure sunsets on January 2, 2032, and because no specific effective date is included in the measure, is assumed to take effect on January 1, 2022.

WRD estimates that this measure will require nine positions (5.75 FTE in 2021-23, 9.00 FTE in 2023-25); and cost \$2,386,808 General Fund in 2021-23, and \$3,084,295 General Fund in 2023-25.

Position costs under this measure are estimated at \$1,187,844 General Fund in 2021-23 and \$1,862,003 General Fund in 2023-25. The nine new permanent, full-time positions under this measure include:

- One Natural Resources Specialist 4 (0.75 FTE in 2021-23) to assist with development of groundwater budgets;
- One Natural Resources Specialist 4 (0.75 FTE in 2021-23) to assess open water evaporation and historical irrigation water use;
- Three Natural Resources Specialist 4s (one at 0.75 FTE and two at 0.25 FTE in 2021-23) to engage with communities on data collection and use- with each position covering approximately six of the 18 hydrologic basins;
- Three Natural Resources Specialist 3s (each 0.75 FTE in 2021-23) to expand the groundwater monitoring network; and,
- One Principal Executive Manager D (0.75 FTE in 2021-23) to oversee studies and contracts under this measure.

Services and Supplies costs under this measure are estimated at \$1,198,964 General Fund in 2021-23 and \$1,222,292 General Fund in 2023-25. These biennial costs include:

- \$334,000 General Fund for USGS cost-share for development of ground water budgets;
- \$250,000 to assess consumptive water use and open water evaporation using remote sensing and Open ET;
- \$130,000 for a facilitation contract for public meetings;
- \$170,000 for other public meetings costs, including materials, USGS participation, and other miscellaneous costs such as venue rentals; and,
- \$314,964 for position-related Services and Supplies.

In addition to the costs included above, WRD anticipates additional costs of \$780,000 General Fund related to observation well establishment and data collection. This funding is sufficient for the agency to drill or refurbish between five and 16 wells, depending on depth, as well as outfit approximately 20 wells with automated recorder equipment. The \$780,000 figure included here is based on the amount that was included for monitoring in the 2021-23 WRD Agency Request Budget, though these funds are not included in the 2021-23 Governor's Budget. This funding could likely be scaled as the measure contains permissive language that states that WRD must generally "expand a comprehensive ground water level monitoring network."