SB 761   STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Sen. Johnson

Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery

Action Date:	03/29/21
Action:	Do pass.
Vote:	4-1-0-0
Yeas:	4 - Golden, Kennemer, Patterson, Prozanski
Nays:	1 - Heard
Fiscal:	Has minimal fiscal impact
Revenue:	No revenue impact
Prepared By:	Beth Patrino, LPRO Analyst
Meeting Dates:	3/22, 3/29

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Expands pilot program that controls urban deer populations in cities where deer constitute a public nuisance to include elk. Specifies that the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife may first allow a local government to engage in activities related to elk pursuant to the pilot program on or after the effective date of Act.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Issues presented by large numbers of elk in urban areas
- Oregon Solutions project to address elk in urban areas on North Coast
- Experience with urban deer pilot program
- Variety of tools to address elk and deer issues in urban areas

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

In urban and neighborhood settings, browsing by deer and elk can affect flower and vegetable gardens, damage landscapes, empty bird feeders, and damage economically valuable trees and other plants. Increased deer and elk populations can also spread tick-borne illnesses, such as Lyme disease, and increase the risk of vehicular accidents.

In 2017, the legislature directed the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission to establish a pilot program to control urban deer populations in cities where deer constitute a public nuisance (Senate Bill 373). The Commission adopted rules to implement the pilot program in December 2018; these rules describe the procedures and requirements for issuing kill permits to take deer within urban boundaries, allowing cities the ability to reduce deer populations in response to public nuisance as defined in ORS 498.012, health or safety concerns, or property damage. (OAR Chapter 635, Division 043)

Senate Bill 761 would expand the pilot program for urban deer population control to include elk.