

HB 3093 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Water

Action Date: 04/06/21

Action: Do pass with amendments and be referred to Ways and Means. (Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 7-1-0-0

Yeas: 7 - Breese-Iverson, Helm, Leif, Reardon, Reynolds, Wilde, Witt

Nays: 1 - Owens

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 3/11, 4/6

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Oregon Health Authority (OHA), in coordination with Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), to: develop and implement strategies for monitoring and responding to harmful algal blooms (HABs) in freshwater environments, including strategies for maintaining communication between Oregon Department of Agriculture, Oregon Department of Forestry, and other water management or water quality agencies; identify roles and responsibilities of state and local agencies related to freshwater HABs; develop enhanced protocols for issuing public health advisories of freshwater HABs; develop a publicly available web-based portal related to freshwater HABs; support specified studies; implement a monitoring program that prioritizes water bodies used for drinking water, public recreation, or agriculture; and support education and outreach on HABs. Directs OHA, in consultation with DEQ, to establish and appoint a technical advisory committee to meet at least once a year. Directs OHA to create, fill, and utilize a position of HABs coordinator to coordinate OHA's HABs monitoring and response activities; appropriates \$260,189 to OHA for the biennium beginning July 1, 2021 for this purpose. Directs DEQ, in consultation with OHA, to conduct water data collection and analysis and, consistent with DEQ's existing authority, develop watershed management strategies to reduce the severity, frequency, or duration of freshwater HABs. Directs DEQ to create, fill, and utilize one position within DEQ to analyze water quality samples and satellite information to help develop watershed management strategies; appropriates \$232,645 to DEQ for this purpose. Takes effect on 91st day following adjournment sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Need for improving interagency communication
- Harmful algal blooms (HABs) work group process and report
- Long-term recommendations for coordinating response to HABs

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Replaces the measure.

BACKGROUND:

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

Oregon is experiencing increasing numbers of HABs, including blooms on the North Santiam River that affected drinking water quality for the City of Salem in 2018. In response to this, a work group, comprised of stakeholders whose work intersects with either drinking water quality or recreational water quality, began in 2019 to consider

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short-term and long-term strategies for addressing HABs and related impacts to Oregonians.

House Bill 3093 A would direct the Oregon Health Authority and the Department of Environmental Quality, in coordination with other water management agencies, to develop and implement strategies for responding to HABs in freshwater environments.