

SB 761 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Rep. Levy

House Committee On Agriculture and Natural Resources

Action Date: 05/11/21

Action: Do Pass.

Vote: 9-0-1-0

Yeas: 9 - Breese-Iverson, Cate, Hudson, Marsh, McLain, Post, Reardon, Smith DB, Williams

Exc: 1 - Witt

Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact

Revenue: No revenue impact

Prepared By: Stuty Maskey, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 4/27, 5/11

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission to expand 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:

- Elk challenges in urban areas around the state
- Local level input to find solutions and to mediate human-wildlife conflict
- Open and transparent process for the management of animals killed
- Experience with urban deer pilot program

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.