

HB 4087 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**Carrier:** Sen. Armitage**Senate Committee On Veterans and Emergency Preparedness**

Action Date: 02/24/22**Action:** Do pass the A-Eng bill.**Vote:** 5-0-0-0**Yeas:** 5 - Armitage, Linthicum, Manning Jr, Patterson, Thomsen**Fiscal:** Fiscal impact issued**Revenue:** No revenue impact**Prepared By:** Regina Wilson, LPRO Analyst**Meeting Dates:** 2/24

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires officials of public bodies to allow credentialed representatives of news media organizations access to scenes of wildfires or natural disasters on certain public lands that are otherwise closed, by January 1, 2023. Allows official to require news media representatives to have completed specified safety training. Permits on-site commander or designee to deny access or to authorize unescorted access to news media representatives who agree to assume risk. Requires news media representatives to carry appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). Exempts public body or public employee from liability for injury or death of news media representative. Requires Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to convene group of stakeholders to develop voluntary guidelines for training, circumstances for denying access, and when PPE is required. Requires report to Legislative Assembly by September 1, 2022. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Documentation of natural disasters in real time
- Balance of public safety and reporting natural disasters
- Establishment of processes and procedures to allow media access
- Year-long activity of stakeholder work group

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

States and federal agencies have different requirements and guidelines for allowing or denying media access, particularly during active emergency response activities, that typically provide for the discretion of on-site incident commanders on a case-by-case basis, depending on what entity has jurisdiction over the site. In Oregon, broadcasters are allowed to access restricted areas during certain emergencies in order to maintain critical equipment for disseminating news and alerts, unless otherwise prohibited by law or the incident commander, pursuant to House Bill 2210 (2015). The same measure required the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and broadcasters to collaborate on a program to train and credential media personnel who would then be authorized to access restricted areas.

House Bill 4087 A requires public bodies to allow news media representatives access to scenes of wildfires or natural disasters on certain public lands that are otherwise closed, establishes criteria to allow or limit access, and requires OEM to convene stakeholders to develop training and other guidelines by September 1, 2022.