

HB 2219 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

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Meeting Dates: 1/19

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Instructs the State Fish and Wildlife Commission to ensure the sea urchin commercial fishery system: establishes criteria and conditions specific to the purple sea urchin fishery; allows an unlimited number of persons to participate in the purple sea urchin fishery; designates kelp beds that have been negatively affected by purple sea urchins as kelp restoration areas; designates kelp beds threatened by high concentrations of purple sea urchins as kelp bed areas of risk; and authorizes the taking of purple sea urchins in these areas in numbers necessary to reduce their effects on the kelp beds.

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The purple sea urchin (*Strongylocentrotus purpuratus*) is primarily found in the low intertidal zone along the Pacific coastline and feeds predominately on algae including kelp. According to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife certain areas experienced a 10,000 percent increase in purple sea urchins since 2014, which puts ecological pressure on Oregon's kelp forests. Natural predators of this species are the sea otter and the sunflower sea star, both of which have fluctuated in numbers over previous decades. In Oregon, sea urchins have been harvested by divers since 1986. Currently approximately 500,000 pounds of sea urchins are harvested in Oregon each year, of which the purple sea urchin accounts for less than one percent.

House Bill 2219 would establish a system for regulating participation in the sea urchin commercial fishery.