

HB 2527 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

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

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Meeting Dates: 1/24, 1/31

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Amends certain provisions of program for special assessment of wildlife habitat land. Allows the State Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) to adopt rules that require documentation of compliance from the owner of land subject to an approved wildlife habitat conservation and management plan. Removes requirement for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to determine whether the plan is being implemented at the time of a landowner's first plan submission to ODFW for review. Authorizes the Commission to delegate technical assistance, plan review, and inspection to cooperating agencies. Authorizes ODFW to specify priorities for plan approval. Requires landowner application for wildlife habitat special assessment to include an affirmation that the plan is being implemented substantially as approved. Eliminates requirement for ODFW to notify landowner and county assessor that a plan is not being implemented as approved, and instead requires the landowner to notify the county assessor of the change in use prior to the next January 1 assessment date. Disqualifies land from wildlife habitat special assessment upon discovery of noncompliance by the landowner. Takes effect on 91st day following adjournment sine die.

FISCAL: Has minimal fiscal impact

REVENUE: Revenue impact issued

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Wildlife Habitat and Conservation Management Program (WHCMP) was created in 1993 and gives a tax incentive to private landowners to encourage voluntary conservation of wildlife habitat. Land subject to an approved wildlife habitat conservation and management plan receives a wildlife habitat special assessment, where property taxes are assessed at the value that would apply if the land was farm or forestland. Currently 15 counties participate in the WHCMP. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is responsible for program implementation, and works with landowners to develop plans and monitor their compliance.

House Bill 2527 would modify several provisions of the wildlife habitat special assessment program related to conservation and management plan approval, monitoring, and compliance.