

HB 3099 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

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

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Meeting Dates: 3/9

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires the Oregon Water Resources Department to study water management in the Chewaucan River watershed. Directs department to report findings to a water-related interim committee of the legislature by September 15, 2024. Sunsets January 2, 2025.

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

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

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Replaces the measure. Directs Oregon Consensus at Portland State University and Oregon State University (OSU) to establish a collaborative process for developing a shared understanding of water management in the Chewaucan River watershed (watershed) and identifying broadly supported actions related to the watershed. Specifies that identified actions must strive to meet in-stream and out-of-stream water needs for relevant industries, communities, and ecosystems; improve the ecological health of Lake Abert and the entire watershed; and balance social, economic, and environmental benefits and impacts. Specifies guidelines within which the collaborative process must operate and requires the process to be developed in consultation with the Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), and the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD). Requires that the collaborative process may not delay or preclude agency activities including those related to water right management and water-related data collection and analysis. Appropriates \$350,000 General Fund moneys to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission and specifies their distribution between Oregon Consensus (\$200,000) and OSU (\$150,000). Appropriates General Fund moneys to OWRD for distribution to the Lake County Umbrella Watershed Council to provide grants to entities supporting the collaborative process. Appropriates General Fund Moneys to OWRD and ODFW to provide staff support for the collaborative process, perform technical analyses, develop a water budget for the watershed, and contract for information collection, analysis, or processing. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

BACKGROUND:

The Chewaucan River watershed is located in Southern Oregon and consists of 651 square miles of forest, marsh, and rural ranch land. It includes parts of the Fremont-Winema National Forest, Bureau of Land Management land, as well as private property. The Chewaucan River's headwaters originate in the east drainage of the Gearheart Mountain Wilderness and the river empties into Lake Abert located in Lake County.

House Bill 3099 would require the Oregon Water Resources Department to study water management in the Chewaucan River watershed and report findings to water-related interim committees of the legislature by September 15, 2024.