

SB 839 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Natural Resources

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 3/15

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) to establish a pilot grant program for the purpose of managing wildfire risk by promoting the use of air curtains by persons that make biochar. Appropriates \$1 million General Fund moneys to ODF for grant program implementation. Sunsets the program on June 30, 2025. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

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:

Air curtain burners, also known as air curtain incinerators or fire boxes, were originally designed as a pollution control device for open burning. They can also be used to turn piles of wood waste into biochar, which is a carbon-rich soil amendment that can help restore degraded soils to encourage vegetative growth.

The U.S. Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station is currently partnering with industry and land managers to develop mobile air curtain burners, and other demonstration projects are occurring in western states.

Senate Bill 839 would appropriate \$1 million General Fund moneys to the Oregon Department of Forestry for a pilot grant program for air curtain use by persons making biochar.