

HB 2137 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Joint Committee On Transportation

Action Date: 05/09/23

Action: Do pass with amendments and be referred to Ways and Means by prior reference.
(Printed A-Eng.)

House Vote

Yeas: 5 - Boshart Davis, Helfrich, Mannix, McLain, Nathanson

Nays: 1 - Pham K

Exc: 1 - Evans

Senate Vote

Yeas: 3 - Frederick, President Wagner, Woods

Exc: 2 - Boquist, Findley

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: Revenue impact issued

Prepared By: Patrick Brennan, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 2/2, 5/9

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Establishes the Willamette River Bridge Task Force. Requires Task Force to report findings, including recommendations for legislation, to Legislative Assembly by December 15, 2024. Sunsets Task Force on December 31, 2024. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Recent efforts to develop new crossing over Willamette River near Salem
- Distance to nearest crossings
- Congestion and safety concerns about existing crossings

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Modifies procedure for appointment of member recommended by Special Districts Association of Oregon. Directs Task Force to conduct study to explore strategies for the financing, construction, and maintenance of an additional bridge crossing the Willamette River connection of Marion and Polk counties. Directs Department of Transportation to provide support for Task Force and to gather and summarize information from prior studies. Requires Task Force to report findings, including possible recommendations for legislation, to Legislative Assembly by December 15, 2024. Sunsets December 31, 2024. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

BACKGROUND:

There are currently two road bridges that span the Willamette River in Salem: the Center Street Bridge, constructed in 1918, carries traffic eastbound on Oregon Highway 22; and the Marion Street Bridge, completed in 1952, carries traffic westbound on Highway 22. The next closest road crossings are the Champoeg Road Bridge, 34 miles to the north, and the Independence Street Bridge, modestly under 13 miles to the south.

House Bill 2137 A establishes a nine-member Willamette River Bridge Task Force, consisting of: four legislators appointed by presiding officers and five members appointed by the Governor; two each from lists of persons recommended by the Marion County and Polk County boards of commissioners, respectively; and one recommended by the Special Districts Association of Oregon. The Task Force is directed to study strategies for financing, constructing, and maintaining an additional bridge spanning the Willamette River and connecting Polk and Marion counties.