

SB 872 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Rep. Boice

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

Action Date: 05/18/23

Action: Do Pass the A-Eng bill.

Vote: 7-2-0-0

Yeas: 7 - Boice, Hartman, Helm, Levy B, McLain, Owens, Scharf

Nays: 2 - Gamba, Marsh

Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 5/9, 5/18

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), in collaboration with certain forest protective associations or agencies, to endeavor to further shared stewardship to decrease wildfire risk across Oregon through increased partnership with federal agencies to expand activities under the Good Neighbor Authority Agreement in federal forests through certain activities. Specifies that activities include increasing forest thinning, reducing ladder fuels and other hazardous fuel loading, restoring meadowland, increasing biomass utilization, and increasing post-disturbance recovery and restoration activities. Requires that ODF request that the federal agencies fund portions of these activities. Requires that these activities be executed in a manner that protects and enhances the long-term ecological health of a landscape, in conformance with the most broadly accepted scientific principles of forestry.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Status of Good Neighbor Authority partnerships
- Responsible use of prescribed fire in areas where extensive prior thinning is required
- Implications of the bill for the United States Forest Service

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The average annual acreage burned by wildfires in the West has increased over the past several decades, affecting both federal and nonfederal lands. According to the Congressional Budget Office, between 20 and 30 percent of fires begin on federal land each year, and between 50 and 70 percent of the total acres burned are on federal lands in most years. The Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) allows the United States Forest Service (USFS) to enter into cooperative agreements with states so that states can perform forest management and watershed restoration services on National Forest System lands. A GNA Master Agreement between the USFS and State of Oregon was signed in March of 2016.

Senate Bill 872 A would direct the Oregon Department of Forestry to endeavor to further shared stewardship in federal forests through partnership with federal agencies to expand certain GNA activities, and to request that the federal agencies fund these activities.