

HB 3187 B STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Sen. Golden

Senate Committee On Natural Resources

Action Date: 05/17/23

Action: Do pass with amendments to the A-Eng bill. (Printed B-Eng.)

Vote: 4-0-1-0

Yeas: 4 - Golden, Prozanski, Smith DB, Taylor

Exc: 1 - Girod

Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact

Revenue: No revenue impact

Prepared By: Laura Kentnesse, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 4/19, 5/17

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Makes individuals eligible to apply for water right examiner certification if they have been employed by an irrigation district, drainage district, water improvement district, or water control district for seven or more years and have seven or more years of relevant technical experience conducting similar work. Sunsets measure on July 1, 2027.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Challenges securing certified water right examiners (CWRE), particularly in Eastern Oregon
- Typical length of application process delays due to lack of CWRE availability
- Typical costs for CWRE work
- Experiential pathways within licensed professions
- Potential for conflict of interest
- CWREs held to code of professional conduct

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Sunsets measure on July 1, 2027.

BACKGROUND:

Certified water right examiners (CWRE) conduct surveys, collect data, develop maps, and report information to the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) on behalf of their clients, who are typically applicants for water right transactions, including claims of beneficial use and some types of transfers. Many CWRE also assist their clients in navigating the water right process, which often consists of identifying water rights and the status of those rights and applying for new permits and permit assignments and extensions.

The certificate can be obtained from the Oregon State Board of Examiners for Engineering and Land Surveying after successful completion of the CWRE exam administered by OWRD. Currently, CWRE eligibility is restricted to registered geologists, professional engineers, and land surveyors. In 2023, there were 373 CWREs licensed and located in Oregon, 30 percent of which are located within the Portland metro area.

House Bill 3187 B would expand eligibility for water right examiner certification until July 1, 2027, to individuals who have been employed by an irrigation district, drainage district, water improvement district, or water control district for seven or more years and have seven or more years of relevant technical experience conducting similar work.