

HB 4044 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 2/6, 2/8

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

This measure directs the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to study and report on risks and issues relating to earthquake-induced toxic inhalation.

Detailed Summary

This measure directs DEQ to study risks and issues relating to earthquake-induced toxic inhalation. Requires the department to submit a report on the study to the Legislative Assembly by December 1, 2024; allows the department to submit recommendations for legislation to emergency management committees of the Legislative Assembly on or before March 1, 2025. Sunsets January 2, 2026. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

(The measure was referred to the committee with a subsequent referral to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means.)

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Review of Multnomah County's study
- Discussion of the Environmental Protection Agency's Risk Management Program

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Clarifies the target parameters of the study, including: identifying areas of concern; identifying and reporting on highest-risk facilities; requiring model scenarios on potential impacts; and completing a policy review of seismic requirements and mitigation programs in other jurisdictions. Requires the department to submit a report on the findings of the study to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to emergency management by December 1, 2024.

Revenue: No revenue impact

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

BACKGROUND:

Industrial facilities which store or handle hazardous materials (HAZMAT) could release toxic concentrations of evaporating petrochemicals due to the impacts of fires that are likely to start during a major earthquake.

“The Risk of Earthquake-Induced Hazardous Materials Releases in Multnomah County, Oregon: Two Scenarios Examined,” is a 2023 study conducted jointly by the Multnomah County Department of Emergency Management and Portland State University’s Institute of Sustainable Solutions. The study uses modeling to anticipate the impacts of seismically vulnerable hazardous facilities located near residential areas in Multnomah County. There are 70 industrial facilities in Multnomah County that store or handle HAZMAT, and researchers in this study modeled four of the 70 facilities for potential release and dispersion patterns in the event of major seismic activity. Their modeling estimated over 2,500 possible asphyxiation deaths from exposure, as well as thousands of possible injuries. Upon release of the report Multnomah County Chair Jessica Vega Pederson sent a letter to Governor Tina Kotek on October 12, 2023, sharing the study and asking that the State of Oregon engage “in

identifying a swift and meaningful public policy response to a recently identified source of extreme public safety risk.”

PRELIMINARY