

HB 4040 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Labor and Business

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Meeting Dates: 2/26

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure requires the Oregon Broadband Advisory Council review competitive broadband grant program applications for compliance with program requirements and make recommendations to the Oregon Broadband Office. It removes the requirement that the Oregon Broadband Advisory Council establish a grant application review committee to review grant applications. The measure also makes the Oregon State Fair and Expo Center eligible for grants under a program developed and implemented by the Oregon Business Development Department for operations, maintenance, and repairs. The measure declares an emergency and takes effect on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Oregon Broadband Office was established by executive order in 2018 and by statute in 2019. It is part of the Oregon Business Development Department and is tasked with supporting broadband development, planning, and deployment in Oregon. The Office is required to support and coordinate efforts with the Oregon Broadband Advisory Council (Council). In 2021, Congress passed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which included funding to address broadband access. The federal funds are intended to target unserved, underserved, and tribal communities and improve digital equity in historically marginalized communities across the state. In 2022, the Legislative Assembly made modifications to the Council in anticipation of this federal funding, including requiring the Council to create a grant application review committee to review grant applications. During the 2023 regular session, the Legislative Assembly enacted House Bill 3201, which required the Oregon Business Development Department to provide grants and loans for broadband access, affordability, and adoption through grants and or loans.

House Bill 4040 A requires the Oregon Broadband Advisory Council to review competitive broadband grant program applications for compliance with program requirements and make recommendations to the Oregon Broadband Office.

In 2023, the Legislative Assembly enacted House Bill 3410. HB 3410 did several things, including directing the Oregon Business Development Department to develop and implement a program for awarding grants to county fair operators for the operations of county fairs and the maintenance and repair of county fairgrounds. House Bill 4040 A makes the Oregon State Fair and Expo Center eligible for this grant program, as well.