

HB 2927 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Rules

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Meeting Dates: 1/27

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure allows the Oregon Government Ethics Commission to issue an order to extend an investigation into the violation of government ethics law, public meetings law, or lobbying regulation for a period not to exceed 60 days.

Fiscal impact: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued

Revenue impact: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Oregon Government Ethics Commission (OGEC) enforces Oregon ethics laws prohibiting public officials from using their office for financial gain and those requiring public disclosure of economic conflicts of interest; enforces laws requiring lobbyists and the entities they represent to register and report their expenditures; and enforces Oregon's public meetings law.

Any person may submit, in writing, a complaint with the OGEC alleging a violation of government ethics laws, public meetings law, or lobbying regulations. Additionally, the OGEC has the authority to proceed on its own motion, as though it received a complaint, if it has reason to believe that a violation exists.

After the OGEC receives a complaint or decides to proceed on its own motion, the Executive Director begins a preliminary review phase to determine if there is cause to undertake an investigation. If the Commission makes a finding of cause, it undertakes the investigatory phase. This phase begins on the date the Commission makes a finding of cause to undertake an investigation and ends on the date they dismiss the complaint, rescind their own motion, issue a settlement order, move to commence a contested case proceeding, or take other action justified by the findings.

The investigatory phase is limited by statute to 180 days but may be delayed by agreement of the OGEC and person subject to the action, or suspended because of a pending criminal investigation, a suit filed for a public meetings law violation, or a court has prohibited the OGEC from continuing its investigation. At the end of the investigatory phase, the Commission must act. This action may include continuing the investigation for 30 days for additional fact-finding.