

HCR 2 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

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Meeting Dates: 1/30, 2/4

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Declares a commitment to the health and safety of Oregon firefighters and to finding a solution to the problem of firefighting personal protective gear that contain carcinogenic chemicals.

Detailed Summary

Resolves that as soon as suitable non-perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) firefighting personal protective gear is available, the Legislative Assembly will enact legislation banning the future use of PFAS in personal protective gear and ensure that personal protective gear containing PFAS is quickly replaced throughout this state.

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: No fiscal impact

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Information about the studies regarding high rates of cancer in firefighters and the presence of PFAS in firefighter personal protective equipment.
- Information that alternatives to PFAS chemicals do not yet exist.
- Cost of replacement gear is anticipated.
- Personal stories about firefighter concerns with the use of PFAS personal protective equipment.

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

In 2023 the National Institute of Standards and Technology determined that occupational exposure of firefighters to carcinogenic chemicals may increase their risk of developing different types of cancer and that textiles used to manufacture the protective coats and pants worn by firefighters often contain measurable amounts of potentially cancer-causing chemicals called PFAS. Currently there is no effective substitute for the PFAS used in the manufacturing process for firefighting personal protective gear.