

SB 961 -2 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs

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Meeting Dates: 2/25, 3/13

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure establishes the Oregon-Ireland Sister State Committee, specifying its membership and term limits, duties and permissible activities, staff support, and member compensation.

Fiscal impact: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue impact: No revenue impact

Detailed Summary:

Establishes the Oregon-Ireland Sister State Committee.

Specifies the Committee membership, which includes:

- Senate President and Speaker of the House as ex officio members and cochairpersons, who preside alternately at committee meetings;
- 2 State Senators from different political parties;
- 2 State Representatives from different political parties;
- 8 members representing Oregon’s business community, with the Senate President and Speaker of the House each appointing 4, and one being selected as executive director to plan for and coordinate activities;
- 1 former State Senator and 1 former State Representative;
- 4 public members, with the Senate President and Speaker of the House each appointing 2;
- 1 elected state official appointed jointly by the cochairpersons should they agree to do so.

Specifies that legislators may only serve while they are members of the Legislative Assembly, and that non-legislators serve 2-year terms. Defines quorum as a majority of members. Entitles legislators to per diem except when outside the United States. Directs the Legislative Policy and Research director to provide administrative staff support for one Committee meeting held before each delegation visit and one Committee meeting held after each delegation visit.

Permits the Committee to:

- Organize activities for and host visiting delegations from Ireland;
- Organize activities for and participate in delegations visiting Ireland, which the Committee may do at least biennially;
- Provide for information exchange between Oregon and Ireland;
- Work with representatives of Ireland on joint projects; and
- Take actions necessary to coordinate and promote Oregon to Ireland exports and Irish investments in Oregon.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Process of gaining Irish citizenship
- Delegation visits, and whether northern Ireland would be included
- Amendment content
- Trade products between Oregon and Ireland

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

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-2 The amendment modifies Committee membership to instead include 1 nonvoting State Senator; 1 nonvoting State Representative; and 7 members appointed by the Governor, representing an Oregon institution of higher education, statewide trade organization, urban interests in the state, and rural or agricultural interests in the state. Committee members may elect a chairperson among themselves, and the Committee may hold one or two meetings per calendar year. Quorum would remain a majority of members, while official action would require approval of a majority of voting members.

BACKGROUND:

Alabama, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and West Virginia are among states that have established or are in the process of starting up Ireland Trade Commissions. As of 2023, Oregon exports to Ireland are the 4th highest of any US state, with roughly \$1.25 billion in exports, and \$601 million in imports, with computer and electronic products, and chemicals, being the largest product categories. According to 2023 5-year American Community Survey estimates, roughly 10.8% of Oregon's population claims Irish ancestry. Ireland had a population of over 5.1 million in its 2022 census, is a member of the European Union, and its statistics office cites a 2022 GDP equivalent to roughly \$527 billion.

Senate Bill 961 would establish the Oregon-Ireland Sister State Committee.