

SB 82 -1, -2 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire

Prepared By: Alexa Piscanio, LPRO Analyst

Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 3/4, 3/20

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure modifies consultations that are required for a grant process that supports work conducted by the Oregon Conservation Corps Program and modifies a program that protects at-risk communities and infrastructure within the wildland-urban interface. It appropriates moneys out of the General Fund to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission for funding certain grant-supported projects. Declares an emergency, effective on passage.

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

Revenue impact: No revenue impact

Detailed Summary:

Adds the Department of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) to the agencies the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) must consult with to ensure the grant process supporting the Oregon Conservation Corp's (OCC) work aligns with its goals. Requires HECC to consult with ODF to ensure that grant process awards fund proposals that meet ODF standards for fuel treatment. Requires ODF consult with OSFM to ensure wildfire risk reduction projects protecting at-risk communities in the wildland-urban interface involving the Oregon Conservation Corps program are consistent with OSFM objectives. Removes provision defining "Tribe" as a federally recognized tribe in Oregon. Appropriates funds to HECC for grant-supported OCC projects and declares an emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- SB 762 (2021) challenges
- United States Forest Service (USFS) reducing seasonal wildfire workforce
- Oregon Conservation Corps (OCC) benefits for rural and tribal communities
- OCC wildfire mitigation
- Skills learned in OCC
- Service to land and people
- Invasive species mitigation work
- Fuels management

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 amendment fills in funding blanks.

Allocates \$10 million dollars for the purpose of funding grant supported projects related to the Oregon Conservation Corps, and \$5 million dollars to match dollar-for-dollar funds secured from sources other than state government that are dedicated for the purpose of funding grant-supported projects related to the Oregon Conservation Corps Program.

-2 amendment fills in funding blanks described in the -1 amendment and instructs the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to deposit General Fund moneys, allocated for the Oregon Conservation Corps program, into the Oregon Conservation Corps Fund.

BACKGROUND:

Oregon Revised Statutes 477.503 requires the State Forestry Department (ODF) to design and implement a program to reduce wildfire risks through landscape restoration and hazardous fuel reduction on public and private lands and nearby communities. The program must prioritize strategic landscapes, collaborate with various stakeholders, and ensure projects focus on protecting human life, property, and critical infrastructure. ODF is required to develop a 20-year strategic plan with ongoing risk-reduction support projects that involve the Oregon Conservation Corps Program as much as possible.

The Oregon Conservation Corps Program was established in 2021 to reduce wildfire risks, create fire-adapted communities, and provide workforce training for youth and young adults aged 16 to 26. The Oregon Conservation Corps Advisory Committee, in collaboration with the Oregon Youth Works Advisory Board and qualified nonprofits, seeks private donations to support the Oregon Conservation Corps Program. It advises the Higher Education Coordinating Commission on implementing a grant process to fund eligible organizations, prioritizing projects that reduce fire risks, promote youth workforce development, and reduce hazardous fuels. The committee also ensures that grant proposals protect at-risk communities, meet fuel treatment standards, and reports biennially on the fund's expenditures.