

HB 3426 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Judiciary

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Meeting Dates: 5/5

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure expands the public safety activities for which interference by unmanned aircraft systems is subject to criminal penalties to include search and rescue efforts and all firefighting efforts. It also increases the penalties for causing an unmanned aircraft system to interfere with law enforcement, search and rescue, firefighting, and emergency response efforts, from a Class A violation to a Class B misdemeanor for recklessly causing the interference, and from a Class A misdemeanor to a Class C felony for knowingly or intentionally causing the interference.

HOUSE VOTE: Ayes, 52; Nays, 0

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Unmanned aircraft systems, commonly called drones, have occasionally interfered with fire suppression and emergency response efforts in Oregon. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulates the national airspace, and drones are considered aircraft under the FAA's jurisdiction. Federal law prohibits knowingly or recklessly interfering with wildfire suppression, law enforcement, or emergency response efforts by operation of unmanned aircraft. 49 U.S.C. § 46320. House Bill 2520 (2023) added state criminal penalties for recklessly causing interference with wildfire suppression, law enforcement, or emergency response efforts by a person that possesses or controls an unmanned aircraft system.