

HB 3532 B STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

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

Prepared By: Kevin Rancik, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 5/13

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure directs the executive secretary (Secretary) of the Oregon Geographic Names Board (OGNB) to compile a list of geographic features in Oregon bearing offensive names and begin a process to determine new names. The Secretary is directed to consult with the OGNB, Oregon's nine federally recognized Indian tribes, county and municipal leaders, representatives of state government, local landowners, and interested parties. The Secretary has until February 1, 2026, to submit a report on their progress, and until August 1, 2026, to provide a list of offensive names to specified persons, and must submit renaming proposals no later than 3 years following the Act's effective date. The measure declares an emergency and takes effect on its passage, and sunsets on January 2, 2029.

Fiscal impact: Minimal fiscal impact

Revenue impact: No revenue impact

HOUSE VOTE: Ayes, 45; Nays, 3

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The United States Board on Geographic Names (USBGN) was created in 1890 and, in its current form, maintains uniform geographic name usage throughout the federal government. In 1911, the USBGN recognized the Oregon Geographic Names Board (OGNB) as the official advisor and state geographic names authority of Oregon. In 1959, Governor Hatfield transferred the administration of the OGNB from state government to the Oregon Historical Society. The purpose of the OGNB is to supervise the naming of geographic features within the state of Oregon and to make recommendations to the USBGN, which has final approval authority. The OGNB also serves in an advisory capacity to federal, state, and local governments by reviewing administrative name proposals. There have been efforts to change geographic names considered offensive; one recent example occurred in 2022 when the Department of the Interior announced name changes for roughly 650 geographic features containing a slur historically used against Indigenous women. 57 of these locations were fully or partially in Oregon.

House Bill 3532 B directs the OGNB executive secretary to compile a list of offensive geographic names in Oregon and submit proposals to the USBGN to rename them.