

HB 3657 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Action Date: 03/26/25

Action: Do pass with amendments and be referred to Ways and Means by prior reference.
(Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 9-0-0-0

Yeas: 9 - Boice, Hartman, Helm, Levy B, Marsh, McDonald, McLain, Owens, Scharf

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: Revenue impact issued

Prepared By: Anna Glueder, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 3/17, 3/26

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure appropriates \$600,000 from the General Fund to the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) and directs ODA to establish and implement a wildlife damage prevention and compensation pilot program to award financial assistance to eligible persons for preventive measures or compensation for certain damages caused by wildlife.

Detailed Summary

- Makes legislative findings.
- Directs **ODA to establish and implement a wildlife damage prevention and compensation pilot** program under which ODA may award financial assistance for preventive measures or compensation for certain damages caused by wildlife to eligible persons who have previously use best preventive measures to prevent such damage and have not intentionally or unreasonably created circumstances that attract wildlife that cause damage.
- Requires ODA, in consultation with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), to select **10 pilot program areas**, in areas east and west of Cascade Mountains, and specifies the selection criteria.
- **Specifies the eligibility criteria** for damages, land, persons, and preventive measures included in the pilot program.
- Directs **ODA to establish via rulemaking** the pilot program’s enrollment: claim submission and assessment process, terms for awarding compensation for barriers such as fencing, methods for determining compensation amounts, and award prioritization, as well as a list of best preventive measures.
- Establishes the **Wildlife Damage Prevention and Compensation Fund (Fund)** and appropriates \$600,000 from the General Fund to ODA for deposit in the Fund.
- Requires **ODA and ODFW to provide reports** on the outcomes of the pilot program to a natural resource related interim legislative committee as soon as there is sufficient data, no later than September 15, 2028, and specifies report requirements.
- **Sunsets the program and the Fund January 2, 2030**, and specifies that any money remaining in the Fund after the measure’s sunset is reverted to the General Fund.
- Takes effect on the 91st day following adjournment sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Elk population in Oregon
- Changes in elk population since 1912

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

The amendment changes the eligibility criteria for the wildlife damage prevention and compensation program and specifies that compensation may not be claimed for wildlife damage insured directly by a private insurance

HB 3657 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

program or a federal program. It further specifies that interest earned by the Wildlife Damage Prevention and Compensation Fund is to be credited to the fund.

Detailed Summary

- Reduces the amount of money a person must derive annually, on average, from producing agricultural crops in order to be eligible for wildlife damage compensation from \$10,000 to \$1,000.
- Specifies that compensation may not be claimed for wildlife damage insured directly by a private insurance program or a federal program.
- Makes a technical fix to the Oregon Department of Agriculture's reporting requirement by specifying that it must include an evaluation of the benefits and drawbacks of transitioning to a program that is partially administered by **county-level institutions** rather than by counties.
- Specifies that interest earned by the Wildlife Damage Prevention and Compensation Fund is to be credited to the Fund.

BACKGROUND:

Wildlife in Oregon is a public resource that is managed by the state for the benefit of its populace. State laws recognize the significant value of wildlife, while also requiring management and regulation that balances diverse values, interests, and impacts. While damage compensation programs exist for certain specific species in Oregon, no such program currently exists that covers damages caused by all of Oregon's wildlife species.