

HB 3596 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

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

Action Date: 04/09/25

Action: Do pass and be referred to Ways and Means by prior reference

Vote: 9-0-0-0

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

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 3/24, 4/9

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure directs the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to study mule deer in the Steens Mountain herd range area.

Detailed Summary

- Directs ODFW to study mule deer in the Steens Mountain herd range area to detect the effects of mule deer maternal condition on population levels, habitat conditions on mule deer maternal conditions, and predation on mule deer survival rates.
- Requires ODFW to begin the study by December 31, 2026, and to use parameters and metrics consistent with those used to study the Murderers Creek and Klamath herd range areas.
- Requires ODFW to submit a study report to natural resources related interim legislative committees by September 15, 2028.
- Sunsets the study on January 2, 2029.
- Appropriates \$2 million General Fund moneys to ODFW for implementation.
- Declares an emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Fiscal impact on the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Data gaps regarding the impact of predators on deer in Oregon

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Mule deer are native to western North America, with the Rocky Mountain subspecies found specifically in eastern Oregon. These deer inhabit a variety of ecosystems, including desert shrub-steppe, woodlands, and, in some areas, certain conifer forests. In recent years, the Steens Mountain herd has experienced a decline in population, and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife estimated their numbers at 3,710 in 2023.