

## HB 2808 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

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

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**Action Date:** 04/09/25

**Action:** Do pass. Refer to Ways and Means.

**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:** 3/31, 4/9

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#### WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure increases the fees charged by the Oregon Department of Water Resources for obtaining a start card for new well construction; acquiring, renewing, or reinstating a water well constructor's license; securing a permit for well construction, alteration, abandonment, or conversion without a licensed well constructor; and for certain continuing education courses. The measure applies retroactively for fees charged for services provided on or after July 1, 2025. The measure declares an emergency and takes effect on its passage.

#### Detailed Summary

Raises the following fees charged by the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD):

- **Start card** fee to commence work on a well: from \$350 to **\$490**.
- **Examination** fee for obtaining a water well constructor's license: from \$20 to **\$25**.
- License fee for **obtaining** a water well constructor's license: from \$150 to **\$165**.
- License fee for **renewing** a water well constructor's license: from \$150 to **\$165**.
- License fee for **reinstating** a water well constructor's license: from \$250 to **\$275**.
- Permit fee for well construction, alteration, abandonment, or conversion **without a licensed well constructor**: from \$500 to **\$550**.
- Ongoing **OWRD sponsored education courses** for well constructors: from \$40/credit to **\$45/credit, not exceeding \$275/day** (formerly: \$250/day).

Declares an emergency, effective on passage. Applies retroactively, if effective after July 1, 2025, for fees charged for services provided on or after July 1, 2025.

#### ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Impact of reduced well drilling due to recent restrictions on groundwater extraction
- Requirements for constructing an exempt well
- Fines, penalties, and enforcement for illegally constructed wells
- Ability and authority of the Oregon Water Resources Department to enforce well drilling statutes
- Potential impacts of increased start card fee on illegal well drilling

#### EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

#### BACKGROUND:

In areas not connected to a public water system, people often rely on private wells and septic systems for their drinking water and wastewater needs. According to the Oregon Health Authority, estimates for Oregonians reliant on domestic wells range between 17 to 23 percent of the state's population. The Water Resources Commission is responsible for adopting and enforcing general rules and standards relating to the construction and maintenance

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of wells. A start card submitted to OWRD serves as notice of intent to construct a well. Supply wells are either drilled by professionally trained and licensed well constructors, or, after obtaining a permit, by persons without such a license. Well constructors are expected to obtain continuing education credits in order to renew their license every two years. Fees related to well construction were last modified in 2021 through the passage of [House Bill 2142](#).