

SB 9 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**Carrier:** Sen. Nash**Joint Committee On Transportation****Action Date:** 04/28/25**Action:** Do pass with amendments. (Printed A-Eng.)**Senate Vote****Yeas:** 5 - Gorsek, Meek, Pham, Starr, Weber**House Vote****Yeas:** 5 - Gamba, Helfrich, Mannix, McLain, Nathanson**Exc:** 2 - Boshart Davis, Evans**Fiscal:** Has minimal fiscal impact**Revenue:** Has minimal revenue impact**Prepared By:** Patrick Brennan, LPRO Analyst**Meeting Dates:** 4/7, 4/28**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

The measure directs field office staff for the Driver and Motor Vehicle Services Division (DMV) of the Oregon Department of Transportation located in rural counties to prioritize, from among the applicants requesting a drive test for licensure, those applicants who are residents in the county where the field office is located, or who live within 50 miles of the field office, or who reside in a county that does not have a field office.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Residents in many areas find it difficult to schedule a drive test
- Many rural DMV field offices have more availability than urban area offices
- Distances many rural Oregonians must travel to get to a DMV field office
- Situations where the applicant has no DMV field office in their home county
- Measure does not increase number of available drive tests
- Low-risk possible solution to pervasive problem

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

The amendment adds a condition allowing applicants to be prioritized if they live in a county that does not have a DMV field office.

BACKGROUND:

The Driver and Motor Vehicle Services Division (DMV) of the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) is the state entity responsible for regulation of motor vehicles and drivers. While many documents and services offered by DMV are available online, there are a few services that must be provided in person, most notably the behind-the-wheel driving test. Such a test requires that a DMV staff person ride along with the applicant during the test, and it also includes a pre-test inspection of vehicle equipment, which typically takes about 20 minutes. The test itself is designed to evaluate skills required for safe driving, including knowledge of signs and traffic signals, ability to back up safely, awareness of the surrounding environment, general control of the vehicle, maintaining appropriate speed, proper use of signals, ability to safely execute lane changes and turns, how the driver handles unexpected obstacles, navigating uncontrolled intersections, and yielding. All of the aforementioned topics and expectations are laid out within the Oregon Driver Manual.

The fee for the behind-the-wheel test is \$45, in addition to the cost of the license or permit, should the applicant pass the test. Drivers who complete an ODOT-approved driver education course within the previous two years are eligible to have the behind-the-wheel test waived. Because this test requires a DMV staff person to spend a significant amount of time with a single applicant, including time completely off-site from the DMV field office, all

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such tests are conducted by appointment only. In addition, 16 DMV field offices do not offer the behind-the-wheel tests at all, requiring some applicants to travel to the next closest field office. Compounding these issues are staffing shortages at a number of DMV field offices that can sometimes leave an office unable to handle particular functions, or even force them to close entirely, on any given day, due to worker absences due to illness or other causes. In some areas of the state, traveling to the next closest DMV office can be prohibitive.

Senate Bill 9 A specifies that in 20 specified rural counties, DMV field offices must prioritize requests for behind-the-wheel tests from persons who are residents of the county where the office is located, or who live within 50 miles of the office in question, or who live in a county that has no DMV field office.