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Bill Title: Relating to ground water.

Government Unit(s) Affected: Cities, Counties, Department of Agriculture, Department of Land Conservation and Development, Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, Office of the Governor, Oregon Health Authority, Water Resources Department

Summary of Fiscal Impact

Costs related to the measure are anticipated to be minimal - see explanatory analysis.

Measure Description

The measure modifies Oregon statutes related to groundwater quality by updating definitions, agency procedures, and interagency coordination requirements. The measure authorizes the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to recommend designating ground water quality concern areas or ground water quality management areas when contaminants are identified in groundwater at specified levels. Following a designation, the Governor appoints a lead agency and convenes an interagency team to coordinate state response activities.

Participating agencies include DEQ, the Water Resources Department (WRD), the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), and the Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI). These agencies are responsible for assessing sources of contamination, developing response and monitoring plans, implementing rules within their existing authority, and providing public outreach. WRD may reclassify aquifers, approve replacement wells subject to impact criteria, and require water users to install measuring devices and submit usage reports. ODA is directed to adopt rules governing contaminant use, source control, monitoring, and mitigation within affected areas. OHA must prepare public health assessments, develop remediation plans, and conduct community outreach. Ground water management committees provide local input, and counties may restrict residential development in designated areas lacking qualifying water service.

The measure sets timelines for public comment, plan finalization, coordinated rulemaking by multiple agencies, and biennial reporting to the Governor and the Legislature. Upon finalizing the agency assessment and outreach plan, the lead agency must submit the plan to the Governor and the Joint Committee on Ways and Means, identifying resource needs and may request funding to support implementation.

Fiscal Analysis

Costs related to the measure are anticipated to have minimal impact.

Department of Environmental Quality

DEQ is responsible for recommending a designation of ground water quality concern areas or ground water quality management areas based on contaminant levels and associated risks. DEQ may serve as the lead agency and participates in interagency teams to coordinate assessment, monitoring, and response activities. Responsibilities include collecting and analyzing data, reporting findings, engaging affected communities, and, when warranted, conducting targeted inspections of septic systems. DEQ also coordinates rule implementation

with other agencies and supports plan development and reporting. These activities are expected to be carried out within existing resources unless new areas are designated and funding is subsequently requested.

Water Resources Department

WRD will participate on interagency teams and may serve as lead agency in response to designated ground water quality concern areas or ground water quality management areas. WRD responsibilities include classifying or reclassifying aquifers, managing well construction and abandonment, enforcing backflow prevention requirements, and supporting implementation of voluntary and regulatory actions. The Department may also require measuring devices and water use reporting in designated areas. Activities will be carried out using existing staff across groundwater, regional, and inspection programs. WRD expects minimal fiscal impact and will address any future resource needs through legislative reporting provisions outlined in the measure.

Other entities

The measure is anticipated to have minimal impact on Cities, Counties, Office of the Governor, Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, Department of Land Conservation and Development, Oregon Department of Agriculture, and Oregon Health Authority.

Relevant Dates

The measure takes effect on January 1, 2026.