

HB 2958 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Agriculture and Land Use

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Meeting Dates: 2/26

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires that a zone director, to be eligible for service, either reside within the boundaries of the district and be a registered voter, or reside within the boundaries of the zone, have served for at least one year as director or associate director of a district, and have a conservation plan approved by the district. Makes the requirement that a soil and water conservation district zone director own or manage 10 acres or more within the district applicable only if the majority of the district lies within a county that has a population of less than 50,000 residents. Specifies that the proposed changes apply to all elected zone director positions and all appointments to vacant zone director positions on or after January 1, 2020.

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Oregon has 45 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) charged with carrying out the state policy of conserving, protecting, and developing soil, water, and other natural resources throughout the state. SWCDs are legislatively-directed to implement these policies in cooperation with landowners, natural resource organizations, natural resource users, local governments, and state and federal agencies.

ORS 568.560 currently requires that each SWCD be governed by an elected or appointed board of five to seven directors. To become a SWCD zone director, two options are currently available. One eligible pathway is for the individual to own or manage 10 or more acres of land in the district, be involved in the active management of the property, be a registered voter, and either: reside within the zone being represented and own or manage 10 or more acres within the district, or, reside within the district and own or manage 10 acres within the zone being represented. The second eligible pathway to become a zone director is for the individual to reside within the zone being represented, to have served at least one year as a director or associate director of a district, to have a conservation plan approved by the district, and to be a registered voter.

House Bill 2958 would make the requirement that a soil and water conservation district zone director own or manage 10 acres or more within the district applicable only if the majority of the district lies within a county that has a population of less than 50,000 residents.