



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Senate directs DEQ to explore voluntary cleanup program

HB 2968 tells DEQ to look in to creating and establishing pilot program

SALEM – The Oregon Senate is sending a bill that starts the process for a voluntary brownfield cleanup program to Gov. Kate Brown for her signature.

House Bill 2968 – which passed by a 29-1 vote on the Senate floor today – requires the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality to study and propose legislation or regulation that would be necessary to create a voluntary program for property owners to clean up or mitigate for hazardous waste on their land. It would create immunity from federal and state liability for property owners who participate in the program.

“Most Oregonians are good stewards and they want to do the right thing,” said Sen. Floyd Prozanski (D-Eugene), who carried the bill in the Senate. “We should be encouraging property owners to take care of their property, and not penalize them when they are trying to clean them up.”

Brownfields are pieces of land where building or redevelopment is complicated due to existence or possibility of environmental contamination. These properties can pose health risks, and the perception of possible contamination can reduce their values. Currently there are 432 known brownfields in Oregon, and there are approximately 13,500 sites in Oregon with known or suspected contamination.

Cleaning up these sites typically includes many steps to even determine what needs to be done, as well as to carry out the work. House Bill 2968 provides a potential incentive for property owners to clean up their properties without being penalized. The bill calls on the DEQ to work with the United States Environmental Protection Agency as it develops its proposals.

“This bill provides relief for property owners who are taking legitimate steps forward toward addressing any environmental issues that may exist on brownfields that they own,” Prozanski said. “This bill requires DEQ to work with federal government to make sure any proposals will be satisfactory for the state and the federal government.”

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