

Chapter 8

MEASURE SUMMARIES

No measure shall be accepted at the Desk for introduction unless it is accompanied by an impartial summary of the measure's content. *See* Rules of the Senate and Rules of the House of Representatives.

In 1979, the Legislative Assembly enacted ORS 171.134:

171.134. Any measure digest or measure summary prepared by the Legislative Assembly shall be written in a manner that results in a score of at least 60 on the Flesch readability test or meets an equivalent standard of a comparable test.

Guidelines. The measure summary *should* present a brief and impartial statement of the essential features of the measure (a summary is *not* an analysis).

The measure summary *should not*:

- Argue favorably for the measure's effectiveness or its merits.
- Present the motives behind the measure, its intent or its probable effect.
- Repeat the text of the title of the measure.
- Inventory the entire contents of the measure.

The measure summary should *briefly* describe the actions provided by a legislative measure (creating new law, amending or repealing existing law, appropriating money, limiting expenditures, providing penalties, etc.). The title includes the skeleton of these actions. The measure summary adds a little flesh to the bones.

Form and Style Requirements. Follow these specific form and style requirements when preparing the measure summary in order to provide some degree of uniformity in format:

1. Omit all articles (a, an, the), unless the article is part of:
 - An official title (Oregon State School for the Blind);
 - A word of art (driving while under the influence of intoxicants); or
 - A proper noun (The Dalles).
2. Begin each sentence with an active verb ("permits," "directs," "limits," etc.), the subject of which is understood to be the bill. These active verbs should pinpoint what the bill does. A list of suggested active verbs follows the examples.
3. Avoid the use of adjectives except when adjectives are necessary to limit nouns.
4. Do not use quotation marks in the text of the measure summary.
5. Include penalties, effective dates and emergency or other special provisions.
6. Omit dollar amounts of appropriations or limitations of expenditures.

EXAMPLES:

SUMMARY

Increases limit on family income for housing programs.

SUMMARY

Expands offense of causing unreasonable noise with vehicle. Creates offense of creating public disturbance noise. Punishes by fine of \$250. Punishes subsequent violations, under certain circumstances, by maximum imprisonment of 30 days, \$500 fine, or both.

SUMMARY

Allows participation by property owner in economic improvement district to be voluntary. Provides that owner who files written objections to assessments of district avoids assessments. Allows subsequent agreement to district assessments by owner.

Declares emergency, effective on passage.

SUMMARY

Revises poundage fees for commercial taking of various food fish and shellfish species.

Takes effect January 1, 1998.

SUMMARY

Imposes surcharge on fine for violation of disabled person parking laws. Authorizes reimbursement of certain expenses for volunteers issuing citations for violations and for nonprofit organizations supporting program.

Sunsets December 31, 1999.

SUMMARY

Appropriates money from General Fund to Oregon Department of Administrative Services for Oregon Historical Society.

Subjects agency to Oregon Department of Administrative Services allotment process.

Declares emergency, effective July 1, 1997.

SUMMARY

Limits biennial expenditures from fees, moneys or other revenues, including Miscellaneous Receipts, excluding federal funds, collected or received by the Public Utility Commission.

Limits biennial expenditures of commission from federal funds.

Subjects agency to Oregon Department of Administrative Services allotment process.

Declares emergency, effective July 1, 1997.

SUGGESTED “ACTIVE” VERBS

This list of suggested active verbs and their connotations is included for convenience only. The connotations are not mandatory, and the list is not comprehensive; only the most common verbs have been included.

CREATING NEW LAW

CONFERS:	grants jurisdiction.
CREATES:	new agency. <i>See</i> “establishes.”
DECLARES:	states new policy.
DEFINES:	either terms or situations in which measure is applicable.
DIRECTS:	mandatory action by specified person or agency.
ESTABLISHES:	new program. <i>See</i> “creates.”
EXEMPTS:	excludes categories of persons or things from application of measure.
PERMITS:	allows person or agency to perform specified nonmandatory acts.
PRESCRIBES:	effective or operative date.
PROHIBITS:	bans specified action, criminal penalty.
PROVIDES:	general term; use only when more precise verb cannot be found.
REQUESTS:	implies lack of sanction upon failure to comply.
SUBJECTS:	establishes category subject to application of measure.

ADDING TO EXISTING LAW

ADDS:	extends categories to which existing law is applicable.
EXTENDS:	length of time; scope of provisions.
INCREASES:	makes larger.

CHANGING EXISTING LAWS

DELETES:	erases.
EXEMPTS:	specified persons or categories from current applications.
MODIFIES:	changes.
RENAMES:	redesignates.
REMOVES:	specified current provisions.
RETAINS:	certain specified provisions of otherwise modified law.
TRANSFERS:	conveys from one person or agency to another.

PROHIBITIONS

LIMITS:	expenditures; time.
PROHIBITS:	forbids.

PENALTIES

(Must be included and *must recite* maximum possible fine or period of imprisonment.)

IMPOSES:	civil penalty.
PUNISHES:	criminal penalty.
INCREASES:	both civil and criminal.
DECREASES:	both civil and criminal.

NOTES