IMPACT STATEMENT

Legislation title:

Re-authorize Environmental Services' Treebate Program to incent residential yard tree planting to contribute to Portland's stormwater management, clean river, and community livability goals. (Ordinance)

Contact name:
Contact phone:

Jennifer Karps 503-823-2263

Presenter name:

Jennifer Karps

Purpose of proposed legislation and background information:

The Bureau of Environmental Services works to manage stormwater and restore and protect the health of Portland watersheds through investments in green infrastructure. Trees are an essential component of the Bureau's green infrastructure investments as they deliver significant, cost-effective stormwater management benefits to the City and utility ratepayers.

Treebate is an incentive program that encourages Portlanders to plant new trees in their residential yards for the stormwater management and complementary benefits trees provide that help the bureau meet multiple watershed and human health goals. Treebate pays for a small portion of eligible yard trees planted via a utility bill credit. Treebate began in FY2010. To date, the program has served 1,562 residential rate payers who planted 3,026 trees. The cost to the Bureau from FY10 through FY17 was a total of \$68,593.50 in credits to customers and roughly 300 staff hours per year for administration. The program serves to provide education, incent tree planting, and provide opportunities for ratepayers to have positive, personal interactions with the Bureau.

The Treebate Program provides a small financial incentive to encourage property owners to plant trees in their residential yards. The Bureau provides a one-time utility bill credit of 50% of the cost of each yard tree, with a maximum of \$50, \$25, or \$15 depending on the mature tree size and stormwater management potential. Trees on the City's Nuisance Plants List are not eligible.

The Treebate Program began in 2009 (Ordinance #183307) and was reauthorized in 2013 (Ordinance #186252). This Ordinance reauthorizes the program and transfers authority for future program reauthorizations to the Director of the Bureau of Environmental Services.

Treebate complements and expands BES's targeted tree planting efforts by offering the credit citywide. The Treebate Program contributes to the City's efforts to expand urban forest canopy for the vital benefits trees provide. In addition to stormwater management (Portland Watershed Management Plan), Treebate trees will help meet PPR's urban forest canopy cover goals (Urban Forestry Management Plan), reduce urban heat island and mitigate temperature effects of climate change (Climate Action Plan), and improve conditions for human health and community livability (Portland Plan and Comprehensive Plan 2035).

Financial and budgetary impacts:

The long-term financial impacts of the Treebate Program are minimal. From FY10-FY17, 1,423 ratepayers received \$68,593.50 in Treebate credits for planting 3,026 trees (average credit \$23/tree). Program administration is also minimal: roughly 300 hours per year owing to a streamlined business process and partnership between BES and the Revenue Bureau. This legislation authorizes the continued voluntary revenue reduction to provide the Treebate credit to eligible applicants. The cost estimates are based on eight years of program data; level of confidence is high.

The average annual Treebate Program cost is \$8,500 per year in uncollected sewer and stormwater charges. Funds for the administrative and materials costs are available in the Sewer System Operating Fund, FY19 Budget, Bureau of Environmental Services, ESWS000015, 9ESWS15WR002. No budget amendment is associated with this item, no staffing changes are required, and no new or modified financial agreements are needed.

Community impacts and community involvement:

Treebate provides a modest cost share to encourage Portlanders to plant trees in their residential yards. Trees improve community livability by improving conditions for human health, crime reduction, property value, and walkability. These benefits accrue to the property where the tree grows, but they also spill over to benefit the local community, contributing to a healthier, more prosperous Portland. Because tree benefits accrue beyond their immediate planting location, they improve conditions for all residents of the local community, regardless of personal identity (e.g., race, ethnicity, ability, and socioeconomic status).

The Treebate Program was developed based on extensive Bureau outreach and engagement of property owners through such activities as the Downspout Disconnection Program, Clean River Rewards Program, and Sustainable Stormwater Program, as well as survey research performed for the Stormwater Marketplace Program and Tabor to the River. These outreach and research efforts identified the potential benefits of using limited incentives to motivate private investments. Friends of Trees and the Urban Forestry Commission advised program development when the program was initiated. Based on feedback from customers and partners, community support for the program is high. In addition, we partner with many local nurseries to host our Treebate program materials. These businesses eagerly host our outreach materials to help customers make informed purchases.

100% Renewable Goal:

Tree canopy that shades buildings can reduce summer cooling demand, and trees that block wind can reduce winter heating demand.

Budgetary Impact Worksheet

Does this action change appropriations?	
YES: Please complete the information believed.	ow.
NO: Skip this section	

Fund	Fund Center	Commitment Item	Functional Area	Funded Program	Grant	Sponsored Program	Amount
							12 ²
				2			