

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)

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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.

