
OREGON STATE SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 2233

Before the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee, February 14, 2013

By: Darrell W. Fuller



Chair Witt and members of the Committee.

The Oregon State Sheriffs' Association is comprised of Oregon's 36 elected county sheriffs. Sheriffs take seriously their charge to be "conservators of the peace." Their role in public safety is broad, including routine patrol, investigating crime, search and rescue, marine patrol, jails, community corrections, court security, civil services and the issuance of concealed handgun licenses

The Oregon State Sheriffs' Association works collaboratively with the Oregon State Marine Board to keep Oregon's rivers and lakes safe for our citizens and the tens of thousands of tourists who flock to Oregon in the summer to enjoy the unrivaled scenic beauty of our state.

OSSA and the Marine Board have worked together for the past few years, with the support of the Legislature, to change numerous outdated policies and budgetary line items. Last biennium the overhaul included updating resource allocation formulas which were more than 40 years old. While the updated matrix is not perfect, and may never be, it is a marked improvement in our combined efforts to efficiently and effectively use public resources to protect the environment, educate the public and be a visible presence on the water to ensure safety.

Several counties are only able to help the state with the waterways in their counties because of Marine Board funding. And while the money doesn't completely cover the expenses for the county, it absolutely is vital to keep these programs funded. Failure to keep this funding stream at its current or budgeted levels will force some of the counties to abandon their collaboration with the Marine Board due to funding issues.

The waterways for the state of Oregon are extremely important to the economic and ecological survival of this state. Sheriffs along with the Marine Board realize this and have given these topics priority, with safety and protection of the waterways our chief concern. It is extremely important to keep this funding flowing to the counties for these issues as well as other issue as they arrive. (Examples: Invasive species, water education, BUII, and other safety concerns.)

The centerpiece of our 2013 effort is House Bill 2233 which expands and clarifies the statutes related to seizing abandoned vessels, especially those which are a hazard to navigation or which pose a danger to the ecology of a lake or river. This bill ensures every effort is made to find and notify an owner prior to any enforcement actions which may eventually result in a vessel's seizure and the loss of the owner's interest in the vessel. The rights of the owners of abandoned vessels are balanced with the public good achieved by keeping rivers and lakes navigable and the environment protected. OSSA is also working with the Marine Board on HB2039 (Outfitter Guide Program) and SB 25 (Charter Boat Program).

Oregon State Sheriffs' Association

PO Box 7468 Salem OR 97303 (503) 364-4204 info@oregonsheriffs.org www.oregonsheriffs.org

The Marine Board and Sheriffs have shown that by working together we can achieve many things which would be unachievable if attempted alone. We look forward to many more years of collaboration between Sheriffs and the Marine Board. Oregon's Sheriffs encourage the committee to give HB 2233 a "do pass" recommendation to the full House of Representatives.

I am happy to answer any questions.