



2/11/15

Senator Richard Devlin and Representative Dan Rayfield,  
Co-Chairs, Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources

Re: SB 5522, Public Hearing 2/11/2015, 8:30 AM

Chairs and Members of the Committee,

The Oregon State Marine Board (OSMB) has long been a valued partner of local governments in the State of Oregon. Through a long and treasured history, the OSMB and parks and recreation providers have successfully constructed, maintained, improved, and operated boating access facilities on over 225 waterbodies spanning across Oregon's thirty six counties. State boaters have directly benefitted from the multitude of partnerships receiving facility improvements, many of which would not be possible without the high quality services and grant funding provided by the Facilities section of the OSMB. The funds provided by the OSMB to local governments for maintenance and operations, as well as capital improvements to boating facilities (over \$6 million in 13/15 biennium) are matched by recipients at a rate of nearly three to one, providing a high rate of return to boaters on the fees they pay. These fees, through the services provided by the OSMB, produce direct benefits to boaters, ensuring safe, enjoyable boating facilities in your local communities. As local governments across the state are faced with decreased funding, these partnerships are irreplaceable.

Oregonians have repeatedly expressed their desire for safe access to statewide water bodies for recreation purposes, most recently shown in the 2013 – 2017 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. In this plan, Oregonians were asked to prioritize statewide recreational services that recreation providers should invest in, of which the second highest ranking item was access to public waterways. As local governments are currently facing unprecedented budgetary challenges, we appreciate the collaborative approach that the OSMB promotes in working with local park agencies to ensure this public need is met. The agency provides a multilevel service to local entities with the outstanding Facilities Program team they have on board. By actively engaging early in projects with local governments to provide expertise maneuvering through complicated environmental permitting processes, to providing high quality engineering and construction specifications as the project develops, the program is dedicated to ensuring that boating facilities are designed following a sustainable approach to reduce the maintenance needs of operators, while protecting the resources that boaters are seeking to enjoy. As many local entities do not have the

specialized knowledge to perform these services at the local level, the partnership with the OSMB is a key aspect of the ongoing effort to provide the facilities Oregonian's expect. Boaters across the state have grown accustomed to expect a service level that has been set through this cooperative approach to funding boating access sites. SB 5522 will ensure that this expected level is maintained into the future. A loss of funding for the agency would truly devastate local governments, resulting in a highly reduced level of service at boating access sites.

At all levels of government revenues continue to be scrutinized in an effort to deliver the best possible service to Oregonians, in the most efficient manner. OPA believes that the OSMB is a model for other statewide agencies looking to maximize effectiveness for the public good. The **OSMB staff exhibit the true meaning of a service based program**, in which their goal is to continue providing safe, high quality boating access sites, designed and constructed in a manner that most responsibly uses boater dollars.

It is OPA's hope that your committee will consider the benefits that the OSMB provides to local governments and Oregon boaters in these challenging economic times that local governments are facing. OPA strongly recommends that the Co-Chairs and the members of the committee pass Senate Bill 5522.

Sincerely,

Steve Lambert  
Oregon Parks Association