

WALLOWA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Mike Hayward, Chairman
Susan Roberts, Commissioner
Paul Castilleja, Commissioner

101 S. River St. Room 202
Enterprise, OR 97828
541-426-4543

April 1, 2015

Dear Chair McKeowan and Members of the House Transportation and Economic Development Committee,

Wallowa County would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 2459. This bill would increase fees charged by the Oregon State Marine Board (OSMB) for registration and titling of certain watercraft. OSMB funding is critical to both marine facilities maintenance and upgrades as well as for patrol on our rivers and lake.

All of the boater fees that come through OSMB go to projects that directly benefit boaters. Wallowa County has used this money in the past to improve our boat launch area including ramp and boarding float upgrades, restroom improvements, parking lot expansions and signage. Additionally our Sheriff's office receives money to patrol Wallowa Lake and the Snake River. These patrols are critical given the high usage of both areas. The boater facilities and patrols in Wallowa County generate no revenue, resulting in dependence on boater fees for their continued operation.

Moving forward it is clear that additional funding is necessary if we are to maintain our existing boater facilities. Current funding levels have been inadequate for a number of years resulting in depleted ending fund balances. The updated fee schedule as outlined in HB 2459 will provide adequate revenues to maintain current level of services through the next three biennium. We understand that increased fees are never popular. However without this needed increase facilities will deteriorate and eventually be closed. This too will be met with strong public opposition and in our opinion even more boater angst.

Wallowa County asks that you support HB 2459 to keep our boating facilities open and safe for the citizens and visitors of Wallowa County and the State of Oregon.

Thank you for your consideration and your service to the State of Oregon.

Sincerely,



Mike Hayward, Chairman
Wallowa County Board of Commissioners