April 1, 2015

AOC SUPPORTS HB 2459,
ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR
THE OREGON STATE MARINE BOARD

On February 9, 2015, the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) Legislative Committee voted to support HB 2459, which would modestly increase Oregon State Marine Board's (OSMB) registration and titling fees of boats, floating homes, and boathouses in Oregon. OSMB has been a vital partner with counties for many years in providing safe, affordable access to Oregon's waterways.

OSMB provides support to counties through its Maintenance Assistance Program (MAP) for the upkeep, repair, and operations of boating facilities. In the 2013/15 Biennium, 24 counties received over $1.13M in MAP funds. In addition, OSMB granted nearly $1.25M to 15 counties for capital improvement projects. All of these funds are critical to maintaining access points that are key to many local economies.

OSMB also provides funding for marine law enforcement at the state and county level, ensuring the safety of our boating citizens. In the 2013/15 Biennium, County Sheriffs received $14.1 to provide this important public safety service.

OSMB funding is derived solely from the boaters who pay the fees. All monies provided to counties must be matched at an approximate rate of 3 to 1. This high rate of return on boater fees produces direct benefits to boaters, ensuring safe, enjoyable boating facilities in our local communities. Because the fees have not been raised since 2003, OSMB has depleted its ending balance over the past few years. Without an increase, programs will be cut and services to boaters will be negatively impacted.

Counties, particularly those in distressed areas, rely heavily on the partnership with OSMB to provide safe waters and facilities. To date, this partnership has been very successful. However, without adequate funding, local marine law enforcement and facility maintenance will undoubtedly decline.

AOC encourages your support of HB 2459.

Please contact Mary Stern or Patrick Sieng for more information about AOC.