

March 24, 2017



The Honorable Lee Beyer, Chair
The Honorable Chuck Thomsen, Vice-Chair
Senate Committee on Business and Transportation

REGARDING SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 867

Chair Beyer, Co-Chair Thomsen, and Members of the Committee,

Despite Oregon's connection to ocean-going trade, or the Columbia River's role bringing Oregon products to markets, our state does not formally recognize the existence of a maritime sector. While that fact may not seem important to some, in our inability to describe the maritime sector's place in Oregon's economy makes it difficult for the State to support its efforts to expand and improve performance, and create high paying jobs for Oregonians.

Our coastal neighbors know; both California and Washington have established, monitor, and support their maritime sectors. For example, the Washington Department of Commerce calculates that the maritime sector contributes more than \$15 billion in gross business income, and directly employs 57,700 people. Including indirect and induced impacts, the sector is responsible for 146,000 jobs in the state and \$30 billion in economic activity.¹ How large and important is Oregon's maritime sector? We can't answer that question because we don't track its economic performance or contribution to the state.

Oregon's inability to define and monitor this critically important sector is important for a variety of reasons. Smart investments to grow the maritime sector are nearly impossible because we don't know what we need to do to provide assistance. Seeking federal support to grow the maritime sector is seriously compromised. Our failure to understand this sector means that we miss opportunities to train young Oregonians for rich careers working in the maritime industry, often at salaries in excess of \$100,000 per year. Clatsop Community College's Maritime Science degrees prepare men and women for careers in the maritime sector, but few people in Oregon are aware of the program or the opportunities for rewarding careers.

Senate Bill 867 puts us on a path designed to identify and support Oregon's maritime sector. The Oregon Business Council strongly supports this effort; as part of our Rural Economic Vitality Project, we will provide technical assistance to the task force, and will monitor and report on our progress to our members. Please vote in support of this bill.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Rogers', is written over a horizontal line.

Jeremy Rogers
Vice President
Oregon Business Council

¹ 14th Annual Oregon Leadership Summit, maritime cluster presentation.
<http://www.oregonbusinessplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Maritime-Sector.pdf>