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March 24, 2017

Dear Senate Committee Members:

In the interest of conserving time during the hearing for Senate Bill 867 Hearing on March 27, 2017, please accept this written testimony. I hope to highlight the major points during verbal testimony.

1. Oregon's Maritime Economic Sector:

The Sector is diverse, vibrant, productive -- and not recognized for its contribution -- and not acknowledged as a source of high wage, high availability jobs. We have provided slides with a listing of the many Clusters.

2. Benchmarking Washington and California Maritime Economic Sectors:

Washington and California have studied the economic impact of their Maritime Sectors. They are similar -- and different -- from each other, and Oregon. We can learn much by benchmarking. Both have large container trades, defense, oceanographic institutions, and tourism. Washington's Puget Sound has a large defense presence and ferry system. San Diego has a large defense and the Blue Tech Cluster.

3. The Oregon Way:

Oregon is different with the Columbia-Snake River Transportation System and more clusters of fishing, including the Distant Waters Fleet. We have the Lower Columbia Trade, large dams with hydroelectric projects and dams, the Upper Columbia River Trade though navigation locks. We have both coastal and inland ports, open ocean barges to-and-from Hawaii and shipyards, including the biggest floating dry dock in the Pacific and improvements at the Port of Toledo. Marine pilots are a key skill set here. We have NOAA in Newport, an emerging Marine Renewable Energy Cluster, and tourism is more important.

4. To Study, or to Take Action (and then Study): Restore Marine Engineering Training

We have people who can help us quantify the economic impact of the Maritime Sector. But, before we spend money on economic studies, we know we need to support Mariner Education. Oregon has about 5,000 USCG licenses domiciled in Oregon. And, the rules are changing that will require more licensed engineers. All three states have mariner training, but... if a student wants to be a marine engineer, he or she must go out of state. This is a problem we can fix -- now -- through Oregon's Maritime College in collaboration with the rest of Oregon academia.

5. Taxation without Representation and a "Homeport Oregon" Initiative:

Most Oregon mariners work out of state. We pay taxes, but... we are not represented in the workforce investment calculations. The calculation is currently based on a database of Oregon employers, not Oregon workers. These are high wage, high availability jobs that are not recognized in Oregon. Look at our Commercial Fisheries, Distant Waters Fleet, and Tug-and-Tow industries alone! We need to fix this. And, let's explore a "Homeport Oregon" initiative to attract mariners and their families to rural Oregon.

Respectfully,

Rick Williams

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