



TO: House Transportation Committee
FROM: Cindy Robert
RE: Support for HB 2320
DATE: April 4, 2017

On behalf of nearly 1,000 members of the Oregon Recreation and Park Association (ORPA), including 62 park and recreation agencies as well as professionals, and volunteers, I am pleased to express support for House Bill 2320.

ORPA membership includes local jurisdiction public park and recreation managers, many of which provide boating access facilities on state waterways. ORPA members see firsthand each day the need for a well-developed non-motorized boating program to address the growing number of non-motorized boaters across the state.

The prevalence of non-motorized boats on Oregon's waters has grown sizably in recent years, with new users in the paddle sport community in particular. The use has now outpaced and surpassed motorized boat use, placing a fiscal burden on local jurisdictions serving this rapidly growing recreational use.

One might think that a boat is a boat, but it's not. In many cases non-motorized use requires different facilities than motorized use, such as docks, ramps, and equipment preparation areas that local jurisdictions cannot provide without Oregon State Marine Board assistance. Without these facilities, non-motorized use is concentrated at current ramps designed for motorized use, which frequently results in frustrations and raised tempers on hot summer days, especially on behalf of the motorized boating community who have themselves paid for the facilities through marine gas tax revenues and registration fees. In many other cases, access is gained from various non-developed sites along waterways. On a hot summer day it's not uncommon to find garbage and human waste strewn along the water's edge due to the lack of facilities. While many legitimate non-motorized users wouldn't think of partaking in these behaviors, the fact remains that many do, resulting in a negative effect to the very waters that Oregonians seek to enjoy.

ORPA recognizes the need for a program that funds non-motorized access facilities. Not only do facility managers see the need, so do Oregonians who consistently respond to statewide recreational surveys, such as the one conducted as part of the most recent Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. Need for increased access and facilities along Oregon's waterways scores repeatedly as a high priority amongst the public.

The Oregon State Marine Board delivers high quality service to the public and their partners. Agency leadership and staff diligently fight to ensure that boaters are receiving the maximum return on their investment. The agency is a relentless advocate for their customers and has included Oregon's boaters in the development of the non-motorized program and HB 2320, incorporating input from users across the state. It is ORPA's belief that with the team and structure that the agency has in place, the OSMB is the most qualified agency to implement this well planned and publicly developed initiative.

ORPA encourages this committee to support HB 2320 to assist the Oregon State Marine Board and their local partners in giving Oregonians increased access to state waterways.