



Clackamas County Sheriff's Office

CRAIG ROBERTS, Sheriff

To: House Committee on Judiciary
Fr: Clackamas County Sheriff Craig Roberts
Date: January 28, 2019; 1:00 P.M.
Re: Testimony in Support of HB 2046 - Critical Impact of Oregon State Police to Public Safety in Clackamas County

As the Sheriff of the third largest county in the state, I can tell you that the services of the State Police are critical to maintaining public safety in Clackamas County. Covering over 1870 square miles, the County is nearly the size of Delaware and our population is climbing toward 500,000. In addition to Interstates 5 and 205, the County has more than 7900 miles of streets, roads and 10 State highways, including Safety Corridor Hwy 26 that runs through the Mt. Hood Recreation Area. We oversee search and rescue operations in the County, including Mt. Hood. Additionally, we are situated next to the Willamette and Clackamas Rivers and have nearly 140 miles of waterways we are responsible for. County wide, in 2017 our calls for service were almost 70,000 and our self-initiated activities were over 65,000 which works out to over 15 calls per hour.

I know firsthand that OSP services have a direct and positive impact on public safety in our County. We rely on the resources of OSP every day and we feel it operationally when there is a reduction in OSP service levels. I have been in law enforcement for over 30 years and I have seen the real impact of those staff reductions. Frankly, when that happens I can tell you that we don't have the personnel to pick up any additional law enforcement services. We are already stretched too thin.

It's important to understand that my staffing levels have still not recovered from the Recession of 2008, when 19 patrol deputies were cut. The reality is many Oregon law enforcement agencies, including my own, struggle to regain sufficient numbers to meet ever increasing calls for service as Oregon's population continues to grow. That is especially true in counties like Clackamas that have large urban areas.

With that introduction, I want to provide information to you about our service level demands in Clackamas County and the operational role OSP plays in keeping our community safe.

With this letter in support, I have included a Clackamas County Patrol District Map. It shows that the Sheriff's Office divides the county into 10 patrol districts. The size of each patrol district corresponds to the population density of a given area. The more people per square mile, the smaller the district. Our intention is to ensure that enough deputies are available to respond to service. Notwithstanding our intention, the reality is on any one shift we have no more than one deputy, and in our higher density districts up to two deputies per shift. That's it, and given our current staffing numbers we struggle to meet even those service levels. You can see in our Mountain District

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encompassing the Hwy 26 Safety Corridor and Mt. Hood we have only one available deputy to respond to calls for service. Fortunately, OSP staffs an office on Hwy 26 - one of Oregon's most deadly highways. Without OSP's patrol assistance and capacity to cover, especially in our rural areas, we could not meet the demand for service.

I hope this helps you understand why the services of the state police are critical to our daily operations. To put this in recent context, as a member of our Major Crimes Team, an OSP investigator is currently one of four lead investigators on the quadruple homicide that occurred in our county last week. Our Major Crimes Team relies on the depth of OSP's investigative experience and access to statewide resources to assist in follow-up investigative leads around the state. OSP's investigative assistance was also critical in the deadly cougar attack that occurred in the Mt. Hood Recreation Area last year.

Likewise, the State Police have been active partners in the Clackamas County Interagency Task Force (CCITF) since 2006. CCITF is responsible for the investigation and prosecution of mid-to-high level Drug Trafficking Organizations in Clackamas County, around the state and also coordinates investigations spanning the western states. OSP has contributed by supporting CCITF with an investigator who is a lead on large investigations, including Title III wiretaps, which have had a local and national impact. Additionally, OSP's participation supports our status as a multi-agency drug task force which makes us eligible to receive federal HIDTA funding. It is partnerships like the one CCITF has with OSP that support the success of CCITF and the positive impact proactive narcotics enforcement and prosecution has in keeping our communities safer.

As you can imagine, summertime brings significantly increased demands for service on both the Willamette and Clackamas Rivers. On peak summer days we have had upwards of 400 people per hour floating down the Clackamas River - many highly intoxicated. OSP has been critical on DUI enforcement in our Carver Park area where countless individuals get out of the river and drive off. Likewise, the Milo McIver State Park, along the Clackamas River is a huge draw that we don't always have resources to patrol, particularly during peak fishing weeks. We rely on OSP assistance to patrol this area and to also assist our Marine Unit in enforcing fishing regulations.

There are countless other ways OSP is essential to our operations from crash reconstruction to cover in our rural districts. Given the ever increasing demands of calls for service in Clackamas County and our current staffing levels, our resources are stretched to the limit. We simply cannot cover what OSP does and we cannot do it without them. OSP assistance is an integral part of keeping our community safe.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Craig Roberts".

Craig Roberts

Clackamas County Sheriff

Clackamas County Patrol District Map

AVERAGE DEPUTY COVERAGE / SHIFT

