

Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Re: HB 5021

Dear Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, Co-Vice Chairs Girod, Gomberg, and Smith, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of the recommended budget for the Oregon State Marine Board. I am actively involved in the nonmotorized boating community and have a particular interest in safety and environmentally-responsible boating. Over the past few years I have interacted with the Marine Board on a variety of issues involving boating safety and natural resource protection. In doing so, I have found the agency to be well managed, staffed with competent and informed employees, and responsive to questions and concerns.

The Marine Board's duties encompass many areas but one that I would like to emphasize is boater safety. The increasing popularity of boating, particularly the nonmotorized sector, has resulted in many people taking up the activity with little knowledge of important safety practices. In this regard, the recent implementation of boater safety advocates is one of the ways the Marine Board has taken action to promote boater safety. Previously, most on-water safety outreach was conducted as an ancillary activity by the marine patrols, which are staffed by sheriff's deputies who are charged with other responsibilities such as enforcement and rescue. Staffing issues have resulted in a reduction of the time that marine patrols are able to spend on the water, so putting trained safety advocates on the state's waters addresses a definite need for messaging about boater safety.

Of course, the Marine carries out many other functions such as administering the aquatic invasive species program, training law enforcement, and managing the system of titling and registering boats. Although it is a small agency, it executes its broad range of responsibilities efficiently and professionally. In summary, the Marine Board deserves to be fully funded as proposed in SB 5021.

Bert Krages  
Lake Oswego

