



**OREGON STATE SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION**  
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PO Box 7468 Salem OR 97303

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**To: Ways and Means Public Safety Subcommittee**

**From: Sheriff Mark Garton, Polk County Sheriff's Office**  
Oregon State Sheriffs' Association

**Date: March 6, 2025**

**Re: HB 5029 - Testimony in Support**  
**Oregon State Police (OSP) Budget**

**Co-Chair Broadman, Co-Chair Evans and members of the committee,**

For the record, my name is Mark Garton. I am the Polk County Sheriff, and I am testifying today in strong support of the Oregon State Police (OSP) and the critical role they play in ensuring public safety across our state. OSP is a vital partner to sheriffs' offices in Oregon, providing essential services that enhance our collective ability to serve and protect our communities. We urge the legislature to continue investing in OSP to maintain these essential partnerships and ensure adequate staffing levels statewide.

#### **Partnerships Across the State**

The collaboration between OSP and county sheriffs' offices is crucial in addressing the diverse public safety needs of Oregon's communities. Whether responding to emergencies, conducting large-scale investigations, or supporting enforcement efforts, OSP plays a key role in supplementing local law enforcement resources, particularly in rural and under-resourced areas.

#### **Crime Lab Services**

OSP's crime lab services are indispensable in solving major crimes. These state-of-the-art forensic facilities provide sheriffs' offices with expert analysis in homicide investigations, drug enforcement cases, and other complex criminal matters. Without these services, many counties would lack the necessary resources to conduct thorough and timely investigations.

### **Crash Reconstruction Specialists**

OSP's crash reconstruction specialists are a critical asset in determining the causes of serious and fatal traffic accidents. These specialists assist law enforcement agencies across Oregon by providing detailed forensic analyses that help bring clarity to investigations, ensure accountability, and support prosecutorial efforts.

### **Traffic Safety and Enforcement**

OSP maintains a strong emphasis on traffic safety and enforcement along Oregon's highways. Their presence on state roadways reduces impaired driving, enforces speed limits, and enhances overall public safety. Without adequate OSP staffing, local sheriff's offices must absorb additional highway patrol responsibilities, which stretches resources thin and impacts other core law enforcement duties.

### **Specialty Unit Detectives**

OSP assigns detectives to specialty units addressing issues such as human trafficking, drug interdiction, major crimes, and wildlife enforcement. These specialized teams provide expertise and coordination that individual sheriff's offices often do not have the capacity to maintain on their own. Their work is vital to dismantling criminal networks and addressing statewide public safety concerns.

### **Staffing Concerns**

Despite these essential services, OSP faces significant staffing challenges. When OSP is short-staffed, the sheriff's offices must fill the gaps, adding strain to already limited local resources. Similarly, when sheriff's offices experience staffing shortages, OSP provides crucial support. This reciprocal partnership underscores the need for sustained legislative funding to maintain adequate trooper levels. Without continued investment, both OSP and local sheriff's offices will struggle to meet the growing demands of their respective jurisdictions.

### **Conclusion**

The partnership between OSP and sheriff's offices is fundamental to maintaining public safety across Oregon. We urge the legislature to prioritize funding for OSP troopers statewide, recognizing the essential role they play in supporting local law enforcement and ensuring the safety of Oregonians.

Thank you for your consideration.