

Submitter: Aaron Bretz
On Behalf Of: The Port of Newport
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB361

Senator Gorsek, Representative McLain, and distinguished members of the Joint Committee on Transportation, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 361. This bill includes vital funding for the Port of Newport to maintain the serviceable depth in the north half of the South Beach Marina in Newport so that we can continue providing vital services to boaters from around the State and up and down the West Coast, including Canada.

Because of the deep navigation channel across the Yaquina Bay Bar and into the South Beach Marina in Newport, this is a major destination for boaters recreating throughout the summer, and international and interstate vessels transiting the West Coast, particularly in spring and fall. It's very common for the Port to see up to 200 recreational boats pass through during a day in the summer. These boats carry on average 3 people each, and these people drive the tourism economy in Newport. Additionally, because of Newport's central location between other major Ports, in the spring and fall, we accommodate many yachts as they travel from California to Washington or Canada (or vice versa) to enjoy favorable weather conditions at destinations of their choosing. These vessels generally stay for several days, and also contribute to Newport's tourism economy at times when other tourism is idle. As Port users come from all around Oregon to experience Newport's ideal location and proximity to bountiful fishing grounds, they need to use the Port's slips as well as the South Beach Fuel Dock as a base of operations for their entire stay. The Port also provides a fueling location for the U. S. Coast Guard's Motor Lifeboats at the South Beach Marina. Since these areas were last dredged in the winter of 1998/99, we have experienced significant shoaling that makes these areas difficult to use, particularly during low tides.

The Army Corps of Engineers maintains the access to the South Beach Marina by funding dredging in both the main Federal Channel into Yaquina Bay, and also the access channel to the South Beach boat ramp, but the Port of Newport must dredge the slips and access to the slips. Over the past several years, we've seen a drastic increase in the cost of dredging projects. The same dredging project that cost the Port about \$325K in 2017 was \$1.2M in 2023, and we've seen those increases continue since then.

The Port of Newport is requesting funding to help us manage the impact of price increases, and to maintain access not only for the public using the docks in South Beach, but also to keep access to the South Beach Fuel dock open. The Army Corps does outstanding work to keep the main channels open, but to keep the South Beach Marina serviceable, the Port is requesting help from the State of Oregon so that we can maintain serviceable depths in the slips and around the fuel dock. Funding this project will mean that The Port of Newport can fully capitalize on the investment

made by the Army Corps in Newport.
Sincerely,

Aaron Bretz
Deputy Director/Director of Operations
Port of Newport