



OREGON LEGISLATIVE POLICY, RESEARCH, & COMMITTEE SERVICES

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State Marine Board Facts

Enactment of House Bill 595 (1959)¹ created the State Marine Board. The State Marine Board is a five member board appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the Senate. Board members serve four-year terms which begin on July 1 of the year of appointment, serve at the pleasure of the Governor, and are eligible for reappointment. Current board members are: Tom O'Connor, Lake Oswego; Nancy Hungerford, Oregon City; Rick Wren, Bend; Court Boice, Gold Beach; and Jim Whitty, Coos Bay.

The board's powers and duties are specified in ORS 830.110, and include:

- Registering and titling recreational vessels
- Establishing statewide boating regulations
- Training and contracting with county sheriffs and the Oregon State Police for marine law enforcement and safety
- Promoting safe boating by publishing information brochures
- Providing boating-education courses
- Sponsoring water-safety programs for youth
- Providing grants to develop and maintain accessible boating facilities and protect water quality
- Registering guides and outfitters
- Licensing charter boats

The board appoints the State Marine Director, who serves at the pleasure of the board. The current director, Paul Donheffner, has served since 1984.

Programs to accomplish the State Marine Board's mission are funded by registration and title fees, marine fuel taxes and federal funds. Small amounts of revenue are received from late penalties, outfitter and guide registration, and charter vessel licenses. The agency receives no General Fund support or lottery fund allocations, and, since 1995, has received no revenues from boating infraction fines.

Registration fees are set by statute and apply to all motorboats and sailboats 12 feet and greater. Registration must be renewed once per biennium. A boat owner must also secure a one-time certificate of title from the Marine Board. The board sets the title fee, not to exceed \$7, by rule.

Marine fuel taxes are transferred to the Marine Board's Boating Safety, Law Enforcement and Facility accounts by the Department of Administrative Services based on the amount of motor

¹ The current system of numbering House Bills starting with 2001 was not in effect in 1959.

vehicle fuel taxes imposed during the preceding fiscal year on fuel purchased and used to operate motor boats.

Federal funds are received from the U. S. Coast Guard's Recreation Boating Safety (RBS) grant program and the Clean Vessel Act (CVA). RBS grants are obtained through the dedicated Aquatic Resources Trust Fund with revenues from federal motorboat gasoline taxes and excise taxes on sport fishing equipment. The Coast Guard restricts use of RBS grants to boating safety programs and requires a 50-50 state match. CVA funds were first made available in 1994 for the funding of vessel waste pump-out facilities and dump stations to reduce the effects of untreated sewage from boats on the state's waters. CVA grants require a 25 percent state match.

The Administration and Education program is faced with the increasing popularity of water-based outdoor recreational activities in Oregon. Over 197,000 boats are currently registered, with projections indicating continued rapid growth in boater use of the state's waterways. Other non-traditional boating activities, such as personal watercraft (jet skis) and sailboarding, are expected to bring additional challenges to waterway management. In 1988, 800 personal watercraft were registered with the Marine Board; in 1998, the number exceeded 12,000. The combination of increases in population, the number and types of craft being used, and the number and range of conflicts between users on the waterways is creating additional boating education and safety needs.

Funding of law enforcement activities is the first priority for the Marine Board after administrative expenses are covered. The law enforcement program provides on-water safety patrol and boating law enforcement through contracts with 31 county sheriffs and the Oregon State Police. The program also provides patrol boats and specialized enforcement equipment, develops and offers basic and advanced training for county marine patrol officers, maintains a marine law enforcement data base and reporting system, performs contract administration functions, and retains responsibility for the waterway marking system. The law enforcement program is funded by registration and title fees, marine fuel taxes, and RBS grants.

The facilities program provides for the maintenance and improvement of boating facilities throughout the state. The board provides technical and financial assistance to local governments and state agencies to acquire, develop, improve, and rehabilitate public boating facilities. Projects eligible for funding include boat launch ramps, parking, restrooms, courtesy docks, transient tie-up facilities, and other related boating facilities.

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