



Senator Roblan and Representative Gomberg

City of Newport Legislative Priorities

Title: House Bill 2284, a Bill that Renames the Port of Newport as the Oregon International Port of Newport, and Provides that Commissioners of the Port shall be Appointed by the Governor, subject to Senate Confirmation.

Description of the Issue: The Port of Newport is a vital part of Newport's economy and that of the central Oregon coast and across the region. The City of Newport has worked very closely with the Port of Newport to facilitate many joint projects to enhance and diversify the Port's economic base, with the City donating land and investing millions of dollars in support infrastructure. These projects include developments such as NOAA MOC-P, the Hatfield Marine Science Center, the Oregon Coast Aquarium, and the Oregon State University Marine Studies Initiative. Industrial property at McLean Point, adjacent to and including the International Terminal, lacks sanitary sewer service needed to accommodate a range of potential uses. The City of Newport, in consultation with the Port of Newport, established a new Urban Renewal District to address this shortcoming. Further, the City of Newport has been very supportive of past efforts by the Port of Newport to secure outside funding from the State of Oregon, the Federal Government, and private parties, recognizing that it takes partnerships to implement meaningful change.

The Port of Newport is currently working to address the multi-use of the International Terminal to accommodate the vital commercial fishing industry, and fulfilling its obligation to foster commercial shipping from the International Terminal. The Port of Newport has gone through significant political transition in recent years, which has led to important missed opportunities.

That being said, the state legislature and governor changing the selection of port commissioners from being locally elected to being appointed and confirmed, in and of itself, is controversial. It is inconsistent with the principle of "home rule" and diminishes the contributions local voters and taxpayers have made to the Port of Newport's success, be it through the election of policy-makers that have made the investments noted above or the \$15.4 million general obligation bond they passed to fund reconstruction of the International Terminal. There needs to be language in the bill for the residents of the Port District to determine that this change will best serve the district in the future.

Actions for Legislators:

- Work to incorporate language in House Bill 2284 to require that a vote of the registered voters located within the Port District be called to determine whether port commissioners shall be appointed by the governor and confirmed by the senate, or continue to be elected by the residents of the district.
- In the alternative, if no referral language is included, House Bill 2284 should be defeated.