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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Port Commissioners sworn in at monthly meeting**

NEWPORT, Ore – Three Port Commissioners took the oath of office at the Port of Newport June meeting on Monday after being retained by voters in the most recent election cycle.

Commissioners Jeff Lackey, Gil Sylvia, and Kelley Retherford all vowed to honestly and faithfully discharge their duties as Port Commissioners, with Lackey and Retherford serving additional four-year terms and Sylvia serving the final two years of an unexpired term.

Port Commissioners also lent their support to a request by the Economic Development Alliance of Lincoln County (EDALC) to extend the Lincoln County Enterprise Zone for another four years. EDALC Executive Director Paul Schuytema explained that the zone creates an incentive for business development and investment.

“If there is any kind of development that involves real property or machinery and they are also creating full-time jobs, the property tax increase gets abated,” he explained. Most businesses apply for a standard exemption of three years, but the program as a whole hasn’t been utilized in Lincoln County to its full potential. Schuytema said marketing this tool for businesses is a top goal of his.

“We can let people know this is out there and it takes no tax income away. It just defers some of the increases, but what you’re getting is an investment in jobs,” he noted.

Port General Manager Paula Miranda was recently appointed to the EDALC Board of Directors. Both in her previous position at the Port of Columbia County and with the Port of Newport’s ongoing efforts to attract new business to the International Terminal, the general manager has first-hand experience in business development.

“It’s a tool and it can be a make it or break it situation,” she commented, referring to the tax incentives. “There are so many incentives out there, you have to be competitive.”

The Port of Newport is one of eight enterprise zone sponsors. Port Commissioners voted unanimously to ask the Oregon Business Development Department to renew the zone for Lincoln County.

Earlier in the evening, the Port Commission met in a joint session with the Newport City Council. The two elected bodies provided updates and discussed projects of shared interest. Urban renewal districts, the mitigation of marine debris, and capital improvement projects were all subjects of conversation. State Rep. David Gomberg was also present to provide a brief update on the most recent legislative session. No action was taken by either board at the joint meeting.

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