



Ports: Anchoring the State's Multimodal Transportation System

- *The 23 port districts in Oregon, like all other special districts, are independent of and exist apart from local governments (i.e., cities and counties).*
- *Ports are not restricted to the marine sector: in addition to marine facilities, many ports operate both air terminals and railroads.*
- *Ports are the backbone of the state's multimodal freight transportation system: the central node for the transfer of finished goods to consumer markets - and capital goods to production facilities - by way of ships, barges, trains, aircraft and trucks.*
- *Ports build and maintain the industrial and commercial infrastructure necessary for the movement of goods, develop and construct the industrial parks that make production facilities possible, and manage and maintain the essential infrastructure for the commercial and recreational fishing industries.*
- *Oregon's nine Columbia River ports constitute one-quarter of the entire Columbia-Snake River port system; three Lower Columbia ports (Astoria, St. Helens and Portland) are deep water ports. Oregon has 14 coastal ports, including the deep-water ports of Newport and the Oregon International Port of Coos Bay.*
- *Ports are governed by a five-member commission; commissioners are drawn from local citizens, elected in May of odd-numbered years, and serve a four-year term. Two notable exceptions are the Port of Portland and the Oregon International Port of Coos Bay: their commissioners are appointed by the Governor.*
- *Port commissions are responsible for establishing the specific direction, purpose and mission of their respective ports, monitoring and approving broad planning documents, and ensuring the port adheres to those plans - no small task for local, volunteer political figures.*
- *Ports receive very little of their annual revenue from property taxes. Port financial viability depends on its success in the private economic sector (by establishing and maintaining revenue streams) that must offset a liability that the private sector does not share: the increased transaction costs that are common to all public entities.*