

Funding secured for dredging on Oregon coast

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

U.S. Congressman Peter DeFazio (D-Springfield) today announced House approval of funding for dredging south coast ports and \$1.250 million for a wave power project in Reedsport. The funding, requested by DeFazio earlier this year, was included in the fiscal year 2008 Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. The bill passed by a vote of 312-112.

In addition to the dredging funding, the bill included \$1,250,000 for a wave power demonstration project in Reedsport. As the first utility scale wave power project in the US, the Wave Power Demonstration Project at Reedsport, OR, would install a 2 MW power station 2.5 miles off the coast of Reedsport. Wave power is converted to electricity through a buoy in the water, using the rise and fall of waves to move the buoy up and down (mechanical stroking) which drives an electric generator. The federal funding will be leveraged with funding from private sources, regional utilities and potentially the State of Oregon.

Included in the bill approved today is funding for dredging, maintenance and associated operations at the following ports:

Port of Siuslaw: \$739,000
Port of Umpqua: \$2,218,000
Port of Coos Bay: \$6,967,000
Port of Bandon: \$275,000
Port of Port Orford: \$333,000
Port of Gold Beach: \$462,000
Port of Brookings Harbor: \$443,000

In order to address additional needs at several South Coast ports, DeFazio was able to secure funding for the Port of Siuslaw, the Port of Coos Bay, and the Port of Umpqua at levels higher than requested by the President.

"Despite the tight budget year, I am pleased I was able to secure funding for dredging operations at each of Oregon's south coast ports," DeFazio said. "I was even able to secure increases for a few ports, but funding still falls short of what is needed to adequately maintain safe and navigable channels at each of these ports. Dredging plays a crucial role in the economic livelihood of the region. I will work with my colleagues in the Senate to attempt to increase the funding for dredging operations on the Oregon coast."

Oregon's coastal channels are heavily used by recreational boaters and commercial fisherman. The coastal channels have become the mainstays of communities dealing with declining employment in natural resource industries.

The Senate must now take up the Energy and Water Appropriations bill.

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