



Port of  
**HOOD RIVER**

**INDUSTRIAL/COMMERCIAL FACILITIES • AIRPORT • INTERSTATE BRIDGE • MARINA**

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February 7, 2025

Dear Interested Community Member:

We are excited that you are interested in serving on the Port of Hood River Board of Commissioners. We hope that this information packet answers all your questions concerning the open positions.

Within this packet you will find information about special districts, Port districts specifically, what it means to be a Board member, and how to serve on the Board.

**Next Steps**

- Review this packet
- Contact County Elections Office at 541-386-1442 for more information about running for election
- Download a copy of the Elections Manual at <https://sos.oregon.gov/elections/Documents/county-city-district-candidates.pdf>

Thank you for your interest in serving on our Board! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Patty Rosas, Executive Assistant, at [prosas@portofhoodriver.com](mailto:prosas@portofhoodriver.com).

Sincerely,

Kevin M. Greenwood  
Executive Director

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## PORT INFORMATION SUMMARY

### About Us

Established in 1933, the Port of Hood River is dedicated to fostering a strong economy and quality of life in the Port District and Columbia Gorge. By managing key infrastructure like the Hood River-White Salmon Interstate Bridge, Ken Jernsted Airfield, Marina, Waterfront, Event Site, parks, and industrial properties, the Port drives commerce, recreation, and ensures responsible environmental and fiscal stewardship. Serving more than half of Hood River County, including the City of Hood River and surrounding areas, the Port plays a central role in sustainable economic growth and regional development. As of July 2023, the Port District's population was estimated at 22,955.

For the 2024/25 fiscal year, the Port's operating budget is \$28.1 million, with major revenue sources including \$11 million from tolls, \$8.8 million from lease revenue and user fees, and \$4.3 million from grants. Expected expenses total \$24 million, with \$16 million allocated to toll bridge operations, \$2.8 million for rental properties, and \$2.2 million for maintaining the Waterfront Recreation, Marina, and Airport. The remaining funds will support projects like a new roundabout and waterfront parking. The Port is also focused on streamlining operations and securing state and federal grants for future projects.

### Our Mission

The Port of Hood River works to promote and maintain a healthy economy and strong quality of life in the Port District and throughout the Columbia Gorge.

### Port of Hood River Board of Commissioners

- **Kristi Chapman** – President, Position #4, Term Expires 6/30/27
- **Heather Gehring** – Vice President, Position #2, Term Expires 6/30/25
- **Mike Fox** – Secretary, Position #3, Term Expires 6/30/25
- **Tor Bieker** – Treasurer, Position #5, Term Expires 6/30/27
- **Ben Sheppard** – Commissioner, Position #1, Term Expires 6/30/25

### Board Commitment

The Port of Hood River Board of Commissioners is dedicated to serving the Port District and the Columbia Gorge with integrity and a commitment to community well-being. Our Board members play a crucial role in shaping the future of the Port by setting policies that promote sustainable growth, economic development, and quality of life for residents. Each position on the Board offers an opportunity for individuals who are passionate about supporting the community and contributing their skills and perspective. When a seat becomes available, it provides a chance for fresh ideas and diverse experiences that help ensure the Port continues to thrive in meeting the needs of the public.

### Upcoming Board Meeting Schedule

Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at the Port Boardroom, 1000 E. Port Marina Drive, Hood River, Oregon, unless rescheduled.

- February 18, 2025 at 5:00 PM
- March 18, 2025 at 5:00 PM
- April 15, 2025 at 5:00 PM



# *What is a Special District?*





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- 2 Fast Facts
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## **SPECIAL DISTRICTS ASSOCIATION OF OREGON**

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# What is a Special District?

**M**ost of us do not know much about local governments; and we know less about special districts. Special districts are a form of local government created by a local community to meet a specific need. Inadequate revenue bases and competing demands for existing taxes make it difficult for cities and counties to provide all of the services that their constituents want. When residents or landowners want new services or higher levels of existing services, they can form a district to pay for them. Each special district focuses on a specific set of services, like fire protection, water, healthcare, parks and recreation, among many others. There are currently 34 different types of special districts in Oregon.

Special districts can cross city and county lines to provide focused services to communities of different sizes, allowing them to address their common needs. Special districts can be small, such as a fire protection district serving a rural unincorporated area. They can also cover multi-county regions. The boundaries of special districts are not dependent on the county or city that the residents live in. Instead, special district boundaries are defined by the common needs of the communities and the services they want to be provided.

Like cities and counties, special districts can sign contracts, employ workers and acquire real property through purchase or eminent domain. Following constitutional limits, they can also issue bonds, impose special taxes, levy assessments, and charge services fees. Like other governments, special districts can sue and be sued.

Most independent special districts have boards elected directly by the residents and landowners in the district, making special districts accountable to the people they serve. The special district board is the governing body of the special district. They set policies that are carried out by the district's employees. The special district's general manager is charged with overseeing the day-to-day operations of the district and reports directly to the board of directors.

## **Statutory Authority for Special Districts**

All special districts are created based on laws passed by the State Legislature. These laws also determine which services the district can provide and how districts are managed and governed. Most special districts are created by laws that are applicable to specific types of special districts. These laws are known as "principal acts."

# OREGON

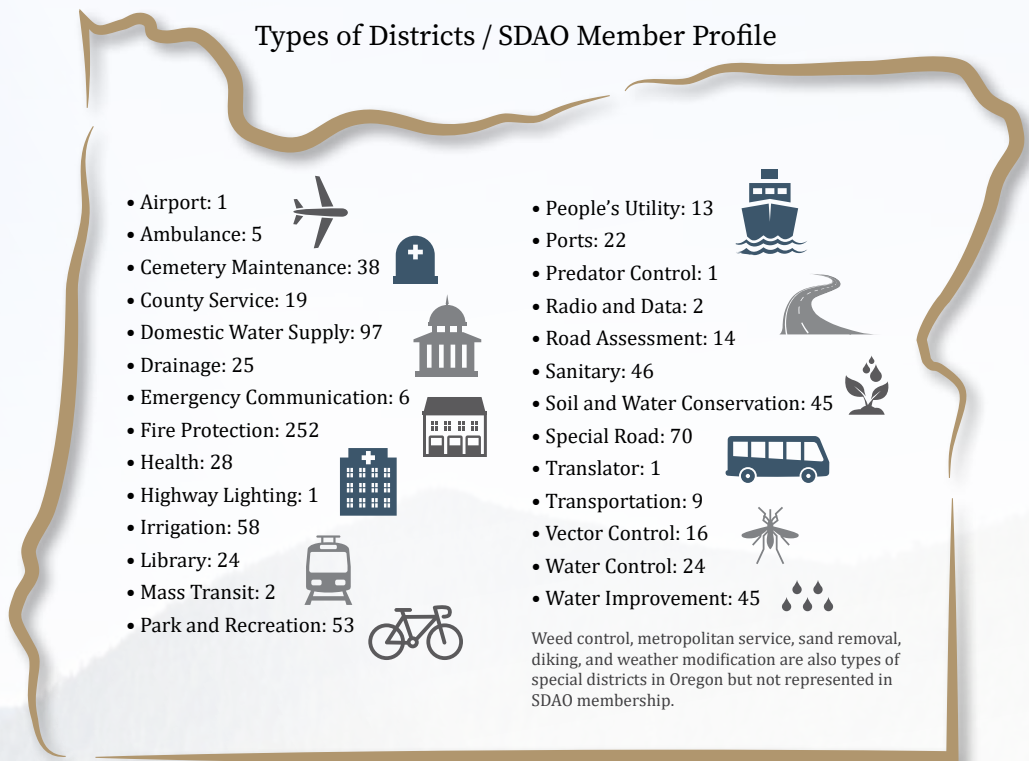
## Special Districts



### Fast Facts

- 1,000+ special districts located in every region of the state
- 920 special districts are members of SDAO
- Over 4,350 locally elected/volunteer board members
- Special districts of some type provide services to nearly every Oregonian
- 350 districts operate exclusively with volunteers
- Special districts are fiscally responsible. 350+ operate with budgets under \$100,000
- Large, regional special districts solve regional challenges and provide for economics of scale, saving tax and rate payer money

## Types of Districts / SDAO Member Profile



# What a Special District is Not

## • Special districts are not state government

Special districts are local agencies which deliver specific services to specific communities. Operating under state laws, special districts are autonomous government entities that are accountable to the voters or landowners they serve. State officials, however, oversee special districts. For example, special districts must send their annual financial reports to the Secretary of State Audits Division. Districts must also follow state laws for public meetings, public records, public contracting, bonded debt, and elections.

## • Special districts are not county governments or cities

Counties and cities are general purpose governments. Counties and cities perform a broad array of services to protect the health, safety, and welfare of their citizens. Special districts are limited purpose governments. They can provide only the services allowed by state law and supported by their residents. Sometimes county commissioners are special district governing boards, but those districts are legally separate local entities.

## • Special districts are not school districts

School districts exist to provide one service – public education. Special districts can deliver a variety of public services, excluding education. School districts get most of their money from the state government. Special districts rely mostly on local revenues.



# Special Districts Provide Essential Local Services



- Airport districts manage airports and enhance local economies.
- Cemetery districts provide cost-effective burial services and preserve historical community information.
- County service districts offer over 22 different type of services, such as law enforcement, agricultural educational extension services, and street lighting.



- Diking and drainage districts protect lives and property from the threat of flooding.
- Fire protection districts protect homes, businesses, and the environment from fires and respond to medical emergencies.



- Port districts manage recreational, economic, and environmental coastal and river infrastructure.
- Health districts promote the physical and mental health of communities, which may include preventative care, nutrition education, health clinics, traditional hospitals, or other services.
- Library districts provide access to educational and informational resources, including collections of books, photographs, newspapers and videos.



- Park and recreation districts provide parks, open spaces, and community programs to improve quality of life.



- People's utility districts provide power.
- Sanitary districts treat and recycle wastewater.
- Soil and water conservation districts identify local conservation needs and support landowners in implementing solutions.



- Transit districts provide public transportation services that connect regions.
- Vector control districts control mosquito populations and reduce the spread of vector borne diseases.
- Water related districts deliver water to residential, commercial, and agricultural areas.

# Special District Advantages

## Special districts can...



- empower citizens to govern their own neighborhoods and community.



- provide opportunities for citizens to get involved in the governance of their community through service on the district's governing body and attendance of meetings, which are usually held near their homes.



- be a financing mechanism to help the private and public sectors govern, finance, construct, operate, and maintain essential public services and facilities.



- provide enhanced and specialized public services in response to citizen demand that a county or city is unable or unwilling to do.



- allow cities and counties to focus more on general government issues.

- provide for a local special-purpose governmental agency with funding, employment, and missions separate from local general-purpose governments.

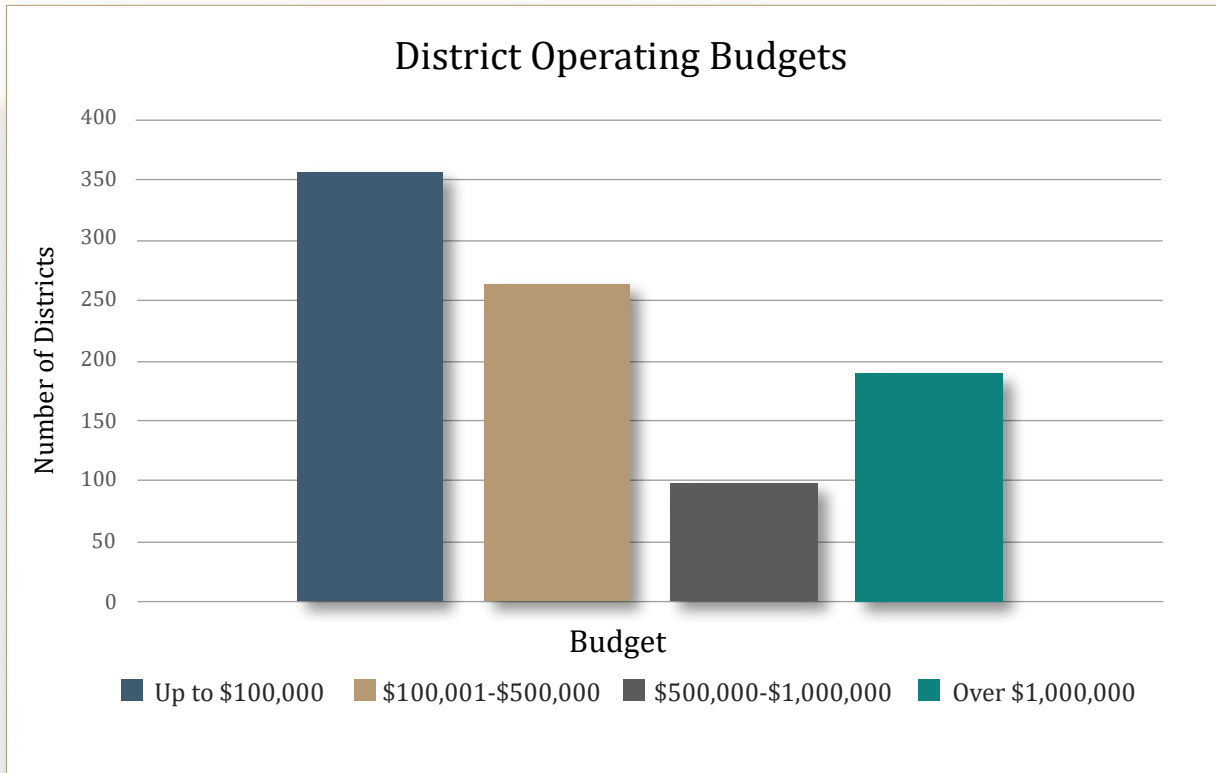


- provide governmental services when the need transcends the boundaries, responsibilities, and authority of individual counties and cities. This is one reason we have regional and multi-county special districts.

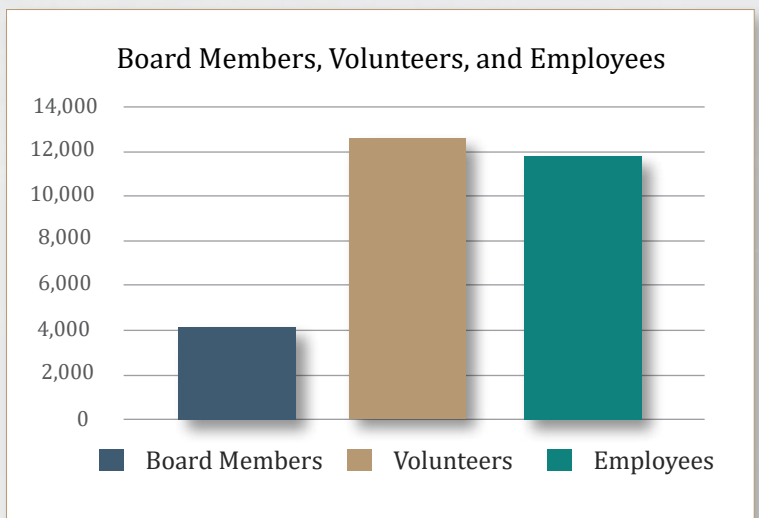
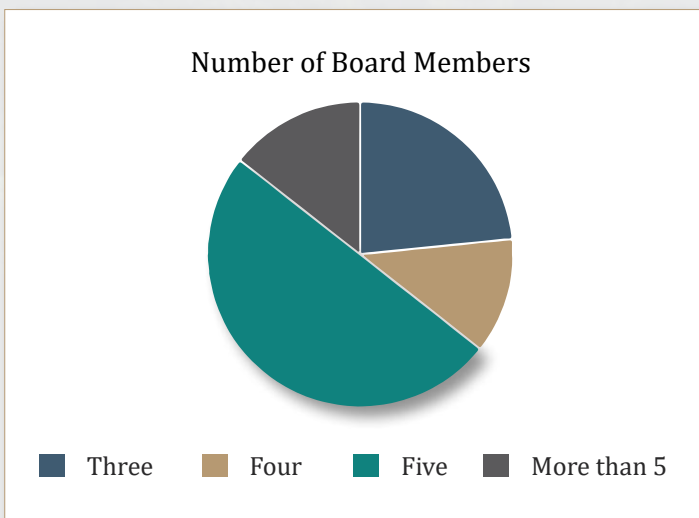
- ensure accountability of public resources, since they are held to the same high standard as cities and counties.

# By the Numbers

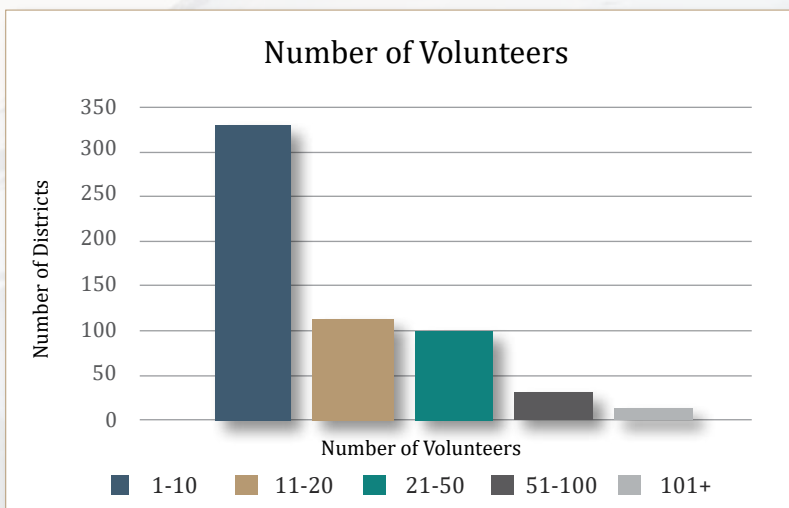
Special districts are funded by local property taxes and/or fees for service. The operating budgets of our members varies widely as do the services they provide. Amazingly, about 40% of SDAO members serve their communities with a budget of less than \$100,000 per year. The graph below shows the number of districts and the range of operating budgets.



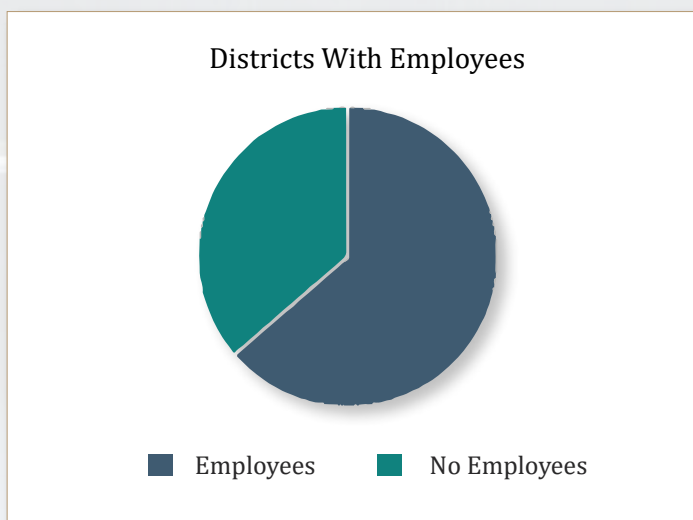
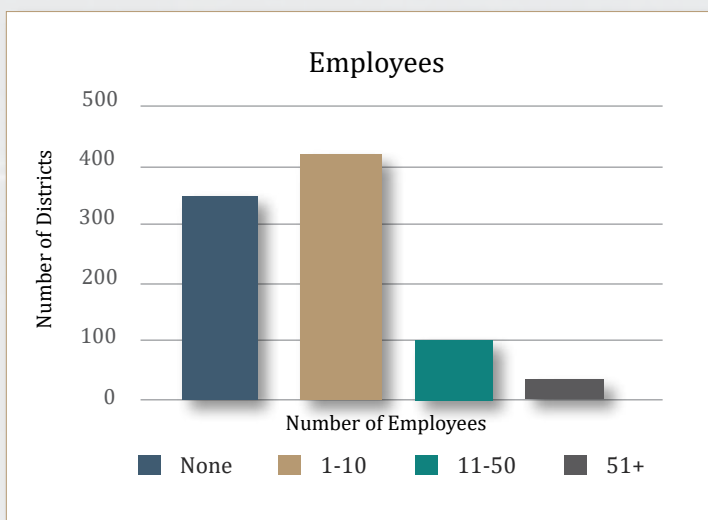
A strong board is essential to the successful governance of a special district. Board members must follow state requirements regarding public meetings, record keeping, ethics, and more. A minimum of three members is required to conduct business. The graphs below show the number of board members for our special districts.



Each day, thousands of Oregonians volunteer their time and efforts for special districts. They are a vital resource and often make it possible for districts to fully serve their communities. 64% of our district members have at least one volunteer.



The majority (62%) of our district members employ individuals to provide services to the community. However, most of them do so with a very small staff. In fact, 75% of our members that utilize staff have ten or fewer employees.



## Profile of a Small District

### JASPER KNOLLS WATER DISTRICT

- Domestic water supply to 53 metered properties
- 45-acre service area in Prineville
- Two 20,000 gallon concrete water reservoirs enclosed within a 1,300 square foot wood frame building and an 80 square foot filtration building
- Five volunteers, no paid staff
- 2017-18 Budget: \$16,000



## Profile of a Large District

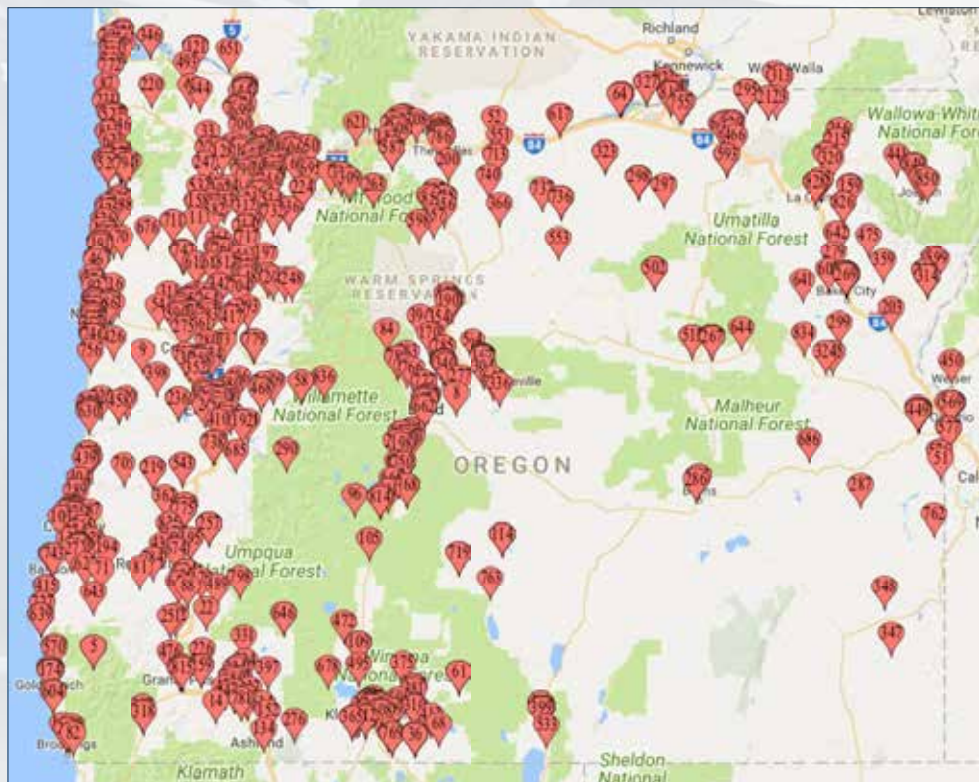
### TUALATIN VALLEY FIRE & RESCUE

- Fire protection and emergency medical services to approximately 530,000 residents
- 390-square-mile service area includes 11 cities and unincorporated portions of Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties
- 26 fire stations staffed by more than 400 career firefighters and 90 volunteers
- 2017-18 Budget: \$149,782,000





## OREGON SPECIAL DISTRICTS MAP



Special districts are the most basic, grassroots form of government. Members of the public can feel like they can have a real impact on the direction, control and services they receive. Nationwide government satisfaction surveys show that special districts are the most popular type of government because they are focused on specific missions and engaged with the public they serve.

The number of special districts in Oregon has been on an upward trend for the last 70 years. Since 1942, this number has grown about 400% to just over 1,000. The State of Oregon estimates that the state's population will increase to approximately 5.5 million people by the year 2050. As our population grows, city and county resources will be stretched, causing a need for cities, counties and special districts to work together as a means of installing the infrastructure to support the growth.



S | D | A | O

SPECIAL DISTRICTS  
ASSOCIATION OF OREGON

**Special Districts Association of Oregon**

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## *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.*





Port of  
**HOOD RIVER**

## **WHY WOULD I WANT TO BE A BOARD MEMBER?**

- **Your community needs you!** The Port of Hood River relies on dedicated Board members who are willing to volunteer their time and skills to help guide the district toward continued success.
- **Looking for a way to make a real difference?** Serving as a Board member for the Port offers a unique opportunity to directly impact the future of our community and region, especially in this time of important decisions for infrastructure and development.
- **Joining the Port's Board of Commissioners allows you to learn from others** while also sharing your own knowledge and experiences to help shape the Port's direction in meaningful ways.
- **Gain valuable experience in government and leadership.** Serving on the Port Board can open doors to other professional or political opportunities, all while contributing to the success of the Columbia Gorge and Hood River area.



# Port of **HOOD RIVER**

## **HOW DO I BECOME A BOARD MEMBER?**

Board members can be either elected or appointed. Currently, the Port of Hood River has 3 open positions that will be filled by election.

### **Election Process**

There are 3 Board positions up for election in the Hood River County regular district election. If you are interested in running for election, you need to:

- Pay a \$10 filing fee to the County Elections Department and file Form SEL 190 ([Form SEL 190](#)), or
- Submit a petition with either 25 signatures or 10% of the active registered voters in the district, along with Form SEL 110 ([Form SEL 110](#)) and the petition Form ([Petition Form](#)).

For more information or to request copies of the forms, contact the County Elections Office at 541-386-1442.

### **Important Deadline**

You must file your form, pay the fee, or submit your petition by **March 20, 2025**.

For detailed information on district elections, you can download a copy of the Elections Manual here: [Elections Manual](#). Pages 23 and 24 are the most relevant.



# Port of **HOOD RIVER**

## **PORT OF HOOD RIVER BOARD MEMBER DUTIES**

A Board member of the Port of Hood serves on a 5-member Board of Commissioners responsible for overseeing the district's affairs in compliance with Oregon Revised Statutes. The Board holds the legislative authority to establish policies and procedures that serve the best interests of the residents.

The Board ensures the district fulfills its mission in an ethical, transparent, accountable, and prudent manner. Each Board member is accountable for the functions described below, which are carried out during Board meetings and committee assignments through information review, strategic planning, discussions, and decision-making.

As a collective, the Board sets policy and makes decisions for the district. While individual members do not have power on their own, working together as a board, you can make a positive impact on the community. The Board's primary responsibility is policy-setting.

In addition to this, Board members are responsible for:

- Attending the Board meeting held on the third Tuesday of each month (with occasional special meetings to address specific issues)
- Reviewing and adopting the annual budget
- Approving financial reports
- Setting goals and assess progress toward those goals
- Requesting voter approval for bond measures and local option levies related to facilities and operations
- Hiring and evaluating the executive director
- Establishing standards, controls, and policies that support sound risk management practices, such as safety, security, insurance, data controls, and personnel management
- Delegating authority
- Engaging with the community