



State Representative Greg Smith

House District 57

*Serving Union, Wallowa, Umatilla,
& Morrow Counties*

News Release:

March 28, 2007

OSP Coverage in NE Oregon Could Increase 30% Rep Smith Backs New Republican Plan

(Salem) A new funding plan released by House Republican lawmakers today could increase [Oregon State Police](#) (OSP) coverage in Northeast Oregon by 30%. [State Representative Greg Smith](#) (R-Heppner) was excited about the new proposal, calling it, “a significant and stable source of funding to boost the woefully inadequate staffing levels in the current State Police force.” House Bill 3535, dedicates 1-percent of the state General Fund to help provide round-the-clock patrols on Oregon’s highways.

The new package generates 140 new trooper positions using \$127 million General Fund dollars in the 2007-09 state budget. A series of budget hearings on the OSP budget got underway at the Capitol today before the Public Safety Subcommittee of Ways and Means . “This funding would be specifically earmarked for the [State Police Patrol Division](#) and it would not require any new taxes or fees,” said Smith. He pointed out state revenue is up 20% even without new taxes.

Hundreds of trooper positions have been cut in the past two decades. Smith said, “HB 3535 would allow the State Police to start rebuilding and planning for the future without having to always worry about which way the political winds are blowing.” The current number of troopers on the road is less than 300. That compares to nearly 650 in 1980.

If this legislation is successful and the agency is able to start adding 140 troopers, the number in Northeastern Oregon would increase from 32 officers to 43 in the next few years. Smith has always been a big supporter of OSP. “I am especially proud to see how well our State Police officers work with the County Sheriff’s in rural Oregon. Those partnerships are critical to ensuring we have public safety resources available in the more remote parts of our state.”

Representative Smith served on the Emergency Budget Board during the 2005-06 legislative interim and [he was instrumental in adding back a small number of troopers](#) to help ease staff shortages in the field. “This bill will finally stabilize funding for the Oregon State Police Patrol Division,” noted Andy Moyer, Vice President of the [Oregon State Police Officers’ Association](#). “This plan dedicates money to the patrol division so these new positions will become a reality and these new troopers will continue to be funded in the years ahead.”

100 new troopers were included in last week’s [Co-Chair’s Budget](#) drafted by legislative leaders, but the new Republican plan adds 40 more troopers and specifically designates a General Fund appropriation. [Governor’s proposed budget](#) also enhanced the number of trooper positions by 140, however, he proposed using a \$25 million tax on auto insurance to pay for them.

####

900 Court Street NE H-280 Salem, OR 97301 ~ www.leg.state.or.us/smithg

Rep.gregsmith@state.or.us ~ 503.986.1457

PO Box 219, Heppner, OR, 97836 ~ 541-676-5154