

January 22, 2024



View of the Port Orchard Marina

*Photo courtesy: Port of Bremerton*

## January Updates at WPPA

Hello from a frigid Olympia, where WPPA's hardworking staff is braving a menagerie of dire weather forecasts to represent your interests in the state capitol!

Before turning to other introductory notes, please heed a few key save-the-dates:

- **FIRST**, please make plans to join us at our **Ports and Maritime Day 2024 reception on Thursday, February 1** (more details below), hosted jointly with the Washington Maritime Federation.
- **SECOND**, please consider staying in Olympia after the Ports and Maritime Day 2024 reception, because **Friday morning, starting at 7 a.m., we have our Ports Day breakfast**, featuring speakers from leadership in the House and Senate Democratic Caucuses.
- **THIRD**, we just learned that the **Speaker of the House of Representatives, Laurie Jinkins (D-Tacoma)** will be joining us briefly at lunch on Friday, speaking to our group from **noon to 12:15 p.m. on Friday, February 2.**

More Port Day information is to come ([online agenda here](#)), separate from this newsletter, but while we had your eyes we wanted to make sure you knew about those big moments that are nearly upon us.

Another important reminder related to Olympia policymaking: WPPA is in the process of putting together supportive letters for our **members' budget requests**. If your port is seeking any state funding this legislative session, please email [Eric](#) and [Chris](#) directly to make sure it's on their radar.



Turning our attention from the joys of lawmaking to the joys of parenthood and family, we are excited to use this Manifest Newsletter to announce an addition to the WPPA Family!

James Cockburn, who joined WPPA last fall as our Government Relations Manager, and his wife Sarah welcomed a baby boy on Sunday, January 7. Cameron James Cockburn and his mom are happy and healthy, and James and his daughter Mackenzie are both doing great as well! James has given us a good update on his condition this past week, but we are mostly trying to leave the family alone. He will be back with the team on January 29, so we will look forward to hearing more about the happy family then. More pictures to come, I'm sure, and for now please send good thoughts their way!

We here at WPPA are carrying the momentum of that cuteness and the warmth of a growing family into our next few cold months of legislative policymaking here in Olympia.

Beyond session, we are full of enthusiasm for what the year ahead will bring, from a Spring Meeting at Skamania Lodge to a return to Vancouver, Washington, for our Finance and Administration Seminar

in June. Exciting developments are everywhere, with the Directors Seminar in Kalama where we can get an up-close look at the Mountain Timber Market, and our Commissioners Seminar being held in the Tri-Cities for the first time in a while. Richland, here we come!

There is lots more to talk about, so please continue reading below. And we will see you all on Port Day 2024!

### Port Spotlight: Port of Bremerton

At our Annual Meeting last month, WPPA honored the Port of Bremerton with the well-deserved title of Washington 'Port of the Year'. Every year, the Association grants this award to the port that shows the greatest success in the industry to recognize their achievements and spur new innovation. For this month's Manifest, we sat down with Port of Bremerton CEO Jim Rothlin and Marketing & Communications Coordinator Erica Filler to hear more about the extraordinary work the Port has been doing over the past year to grow the local economy, strengthen its community, and work collaboratively with partners to improve quality of life for the residents of Kitsap County.

"We're grateful to win this award," Rothlin said. "Our success is the product of years of strategic planning, and you never know when everything will fall into place. With 30 people working together, the culture of the team is so important. The drive of the employees and a belief in accountability got us to this point."



## Economic Growth, Sustainability, and Partnerships

This past year has seen substantial successes and progress for the Port, including investments in its marina, industrial park, airport, and community to help support tenants, businesses, and tribal partners. Over the course of 2023, the Port doubled their American Cruise Lines dockings, attracting more visitors and local spending to the area and supporting local commerce and small businesses. Furthering this expansion of tourism, the port signed a 40-year lease with the Circuit of the Northwest to construct and operate a premier regional sports event center in



American Cruise Lines vessel docked at the Bremerton Marina

**Photo courtesy: Port of Bremerton**

the port's Olympia View Industrial Park. This project will bring more than 900 jobs and \$75 million in revenue to Kitsap County.

The port has also been working on infrastructure projects for broad public benefit, including securing \$15.7 million in state and federal funds to replace the Port Orchard Marina breakwater and partnering with the Suquamish Tribe to reserve a portion of the breakwater for the tribal fishing fleet. The port has also installed electric vessel charging ports at the Port Orchard Marina, which will not only help customers reduce emissions, but secures long-term capacity for Kitsap Transit, which docks ferries at the Marina and will be transitioning its fleet to electric vessels.

The port has also completed significant sustainability projects at Bremerton National Airport, such as installing new airport charging port conduits and working with Puget Sound Energy to build a 34-acre solar farm. Airport safety and efficiency has also been improved by bringing a \$10.7 million runway lighting project and \$3.1 million corporate hanger project to fruition, which will not only support general aviation but also ensure Airlift Northwest and WRG Fire Training can continue to provide vital emergency response services to the region. The port is also partnering with the Bremerton Aviation Center for Education to train aviators and build an electric motor glider, set to take flight later this year.



Breakwater at the Port Orchard Marina

**Photo courtesy: Port of Bremerton**

## Strengthening Community Services

Supporting the community through economic development is core to the port's mission, as it is to all public ports in Washington. In addition to these larger scale projects, the Port of Bremerton has continued providing important services such as maintaining Harper Pier for local fishing, diving, and other key needs and facilitating a food drive among port tenants and partners to collect and donate 6,714 pounds of food to the South Kitsap Helpline and Bremerton Foodline. The port is also partnering with a local developer to bring much-needed housing to Bremerton by developing the Bremerton Marina parking lot as a dual-purpose apartment building and public parking garage.

“Because of our size, we don’t have the resources to do all of this on our own,” Rothlin said. “One of the keys to success is working with the community on shared goals and with private partners, too, and this requires relationship-building over a long period of time. Because of this partnership, there’s a piece of our success that belongs to the whole community.”

The Port of Bremerton embarked on a number of major projects in the past year which helped to greatly expand their capacity and to highlight the port’s overall importance to the community. This work has helped ensure port services remain high-quality and stable for years to come while also promoting climate resiliency and working to reduce the environmental impact of the port’s facilities.

The WPPA honors the Port of Bremerton’s tireless and effective work to innovate and serve its community, and naming them Port of the Year is a great way to highlight all of the wonderful work done by the Port in the past year. Learn more about the Port of Bremerton at [www.portofbremerton.org](http://www.portofbremerton.org).



Bremerton Marina (top) and Olympic View Industrial Park (bottom)

*Photo courtesy: Port of Bremerton*

## Legislative Spotlight – A Day in the Life of a WPPA Lobbyist

As the second week of the 2024 Washington State Legislative Session comes to a close, we thought it would be a great opportunity to give you a glimpse into a Day in the Life of your advocacy team on the ground in Olympia. The 60-day legislative session is jam-packed with committee meetings, caucus events, and floor action. But what does that all mean? Here are some answers to your questions about the ins-and-outs of a day in the life of Eric, Chris, Carly, and James during the legislative session.

### Legislative Committee Meetings

The committee meeting process is the most time intensive part of the legislative session and is where bills start their journey to potentially becoming law. Twenty House Committees and 15 Senate Committees meet most days, particularly early in the legislative session, in two-hour blocks, between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. The committee structure in both chambers also includes the distinction between policy and fiscal committees, meaning that bills with a fiscal impact (or as is often said, that “spend or collect money”) must generally be heard in both a policy and a fiscal committee. Committees have the following three functions:



- **Public Hearing on Bills** – Once a bill is introduced in the chamber and assigned to a committee it is ready for a public hearing. Committee staff brief bills and answer questions and then it's up to the bill's prime sponsor to convince committee members why they should advance the bill out of committee by testifying in support of it. Anyone can sign up to testify on a bill and remote testimony remains a popular option. Generally, when you testify on a bill you must declare a position on the bill (pro, con or other) and you have anywhere from 60 seconds and between three or four minutes to testify. Committee members may ask clarifying or follow-up questions of anyone offering testimony on a bill.
- **Executive Session** – Committees advance bills out of the committee by acting in executive session. Staff will again brief the committee on bills and describe any amendments that are up for consideration. The committee will then typically break for caucus so each party can determine if it will support the bill and any amendments. Most bills have one or two amendments while budgets can have over 100 amendments. Any committee member may offer amendments. Following caucus, the committee reconvenes and votes on each amendment and then votes to advance the amended bill out of the committee.
- **Work Sessions** – Committees seeking to learn more about topics of interest will typically do so by convening a work session. Work sessions are more prevalent early in session as committees are setting the stage for the types of legislation they will be considering. Work sessions can also include updates from agency staff, recommendations from previously funded studies or detailed reports on the implementation progress of recently adopted programs or other legislation.

Committee proceedings occupy a significant portion of the week for your advocacy team. WPPA staff attend committee meetings to testify on bills, to monitor bills and learn their significance through testimony given by the bill sponsor and others, to gauge the reaction of committee members to bills and to testimony, and sometimes even to observe the Executive Session process in case we have put forward any amendments or are particularly interested in the fate of a bill.

Committee time also gives us a chance to meet with lawmakers and other advocates in the halls outside committee rooms, where members who are running back and forth between their offices and committee rooms will often give you three to five minutes to discuss a bill, a budget item, or another request. The hallways are full of staff, members, groups of advocates in town for their "Hill Days," and members of the public who are following a specific hearing. It's a hub of activity and a sea of people and we're all in the midst!

### **Floor Activity**

Once bills have advanced through the committee process and they have made it onto the floor calendar they are ready to be considered for an up or down vote by the entire chamber. Floor activity happens intermittently throughout session, although it will consume an increasingly larger portion of the legislative day as session progresses. Much of the time devoted to floor activity is spent in caucus, where each party discusses how they will vote on each bill, how they will vote on any amendments put forward, who will speak to each bill and amendment, and who "manages" the bill on the floor for their party. Each chamber has different procedures, but in the end a bill must receive greater than 50 percent of the vote to pass out of the chamber. Popular bills with little to no opposition can be voted on in as few as 90 seconds while some bills can take three or more hours of debate and consideration of amendments.

Floor Activity can occur anytime of the day and at least a handful of days each session will extend well into the early morning hours before being adjourned. During floor activity, the crowd of advocates, staff, and public groups shifts from the committee hallways to the Capitol Rotunda, where members occasionally emerge from the House and Senate floor to hold huddled conversations with lobbyists, greet constituents and school groups, and hold ad-hoc stakeholder meetings. Once the committee action has slowed and the days are spent primarily on the floor, your WPPA team can be found camped out by the House and Senate doors to keep a close eye on the bills we're still tracking and supporting.

**Meeting with Legislators** – Communicating our members’ priorities with legislators through a variety of means one of the areas that consume most of your advocacy team’s time. Whether it be a broad sweeping policy position or in-the-weeds word changes needed on a specific bill, every form of communication is deployed to get the message across. From testimony provided in the committee process, to quick chats outside of a meeting room, to a hastily arranged meeting in the “wings” of the chamber during floor activity or a frantic text message during a vote, the most succinct timely communication can be the difference between success and needing to offer an amendment later.

**Working with other advocates** – Effective advocacy often requires looking for ways to find mutual benefit with many interest groups. WPPA works with many different organizations on a daily basis to coordinate advocacy or simply work through complicated or challenging policy. We convene meetings in the WPPA conference room to get aligned on a position before offering testimony as a like-minded panel; we go from big and last-minute Zoom calls to a cramped table in the Dome Deli to compare notes on bill amendments; and we crouch in the backs of committee rooms to urge other lobbyists to see things our way.

**Communicating with our members** – Last but certainly not least, one of our priorities is making sure you all have the information you need to help us to be successful together. We coordinate advocacy during our Monday “Port Lobby Lunch” meetings that include internal port government relations staff and external lobbyists. We gather Thursdays as internal WPPA staff with our lobbyist Marian to look ahead at the coming week, prepare for testimony we’ll provide and amendments we’ll request. And we provide weekly wrap-up communications that review the week and highlight what we expect to happen in the week ahead. In between there are emails, phone calls, and text messages with all of you to align strategies, finalize testimony language, red-line bill edits, and more.

We hope this brief description of a day in the life of our legislative session has given you a little more understanding of the process and how your advocacy team ensures your interests are being heard in Olympia.

## Knowing the Waters

If you didn’t get your fill of holiday spirit last month, check out January’s Knowing the Waters, written by WPPA Legal Counsel Frank Chmelik and Tim Schermetzler of CSD Attorneys at Law. This issue brings some humor to the topic of accepting gifts, using public funds for employee appreciation, and other holiday wishes. Read the [article here](#).

## Grant and Training Updates

**MRSC / Enduris: The Role of an Effective Board Member – January 24, 10 a.m.**

This hybrid training is offered for port staff, in preparation for legislative changes taking effect July 2024. The training will cover changes to the small works roster, showcase interactive and practical implementation tools, and include discussion of challenges related to apprenticeship utilization, prevailing wages, and other bidding practices.

**When:** 10 to 2 p.m. Friday, February 23

**Where:** Online/virtual + in-person at the Port of Vancouver Commission Room (3103 NW Lower River Road)

**Who:** Port staff involved in small works contracting

**Registration:** <https://mrsc.org/training/upcoming-trainings/small-works-for-ports>

MRSC Training: OPMA – Common Challenges and Practical Considerations – February 29, 10 a.m.

MRSC is hosting a webinar covering common challenges of adhering to the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA), basis and management of executive sessions, and other practical considerations, such as notice requirements, canceling meetings, and public comment. This training is eligible to provide 1.0 credit hour toward a Certificate of Municipal Leadership (CML) for elected officials.

**When:** 10 to 11 a.m. Thursday, February 29

**Where:** Online/virtual

**Who:** Elected officials, local government staff

**Cost:** \$40 – scholarships available

**Registration:** <https://mrsc.swoogo.com/topmaccapc/begin>

Department of Health Community Capacity Building Grant Program – Due Jan. 26

Local governments that partner with tribes or community organizations are eligible to apply for a new grant opportunity that focuses on addressing community-identified needs to support community health in a changing climate. The program, administered through DOH's Climate and Health Adaptation Initiative (CHAI), expects to announce awards by Feb. 15. [Learn more here.](#)

- Applications due **Jan. 26 by 11:59 p.m.** Pacific Standard Time.
- Anticipating eight awards of approximately \$80,000 to \$120,000.
- Ports can be eligible if applying in partnership with a community-based organization or tribe.
- The granting agency's program is specifically focused on protecting and promoting the health of communities who are experiencing the harmful consequences of climate change first and worst.

Ecology Remedial Action Grants – Solicitation Opens Feb. 6

The solicitation for the 2025-2027 funding evaluation cycle for all three Ecology Remedial Action Grants opens on Feb. 6 and closes March 6 at 4 p.m.

- Due **March 6 by 4 p.m.**
- Grants require **10% to 50% in matching funds.**
- Eligible project types include interim actions, remedial investigations, feasibility studies and remedy selection, engineering design and remedy construction, and more.

Click [here](#) to learn more about this biennial program, including past projects, resources, and program contact information.

Coastal Protection Fund Grant – due February 6, 2024

Applications for the [Terry Husseman Account \(THA\) Coastal Protection Fund](#) will open on January 2. The program supports locally sponsored projects that restore or enhance the coastal environment, such as those addressing water quality issues or for protecting or enhancing fish and wildlife habitat.

- Grant awards range from \$10,000 - \$50,000.
- There is **no match or cost-share requirement.**
- Applications are due **February 6, 2024.**

Ecology Clean Diesel Grant Funding – due February 27, 2024

Coming soon, Ecology will offer \$2.24M for projects in Washington to reduce emissions by scrapping and replacing diesel transit buses with new fuel cell buses, and diesel yard trucks with new electric yard trucks. Applications are due **February 27, 2024.** More information can be found [here](#) on Ecology's website.

## RAISE Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for 2024 Announced – due February 28, 2024

The U.S. Department of Transportation will be providing up to \$1.5 billion in grant funding in FY 2024 for local and regional transportation projects through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program.

- Projects designated “RCN Program Extra” under FY 2023’s Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program and submitted under the FY 2024 NOFO will have a greater opportunity for advancement in the evaluation process.
- Half of the funding will go to rural areas, and half to urban areas.
- \$15 million is set aside for projects located in Areas of Persistent Poverty or Historically Disadvantaged Communities, which are also eligible for up to 100% federal cost share.
- Applicants will be evaluated based on how projects can address climate change, ensure racial equity, and increase access to opportunities across their communities.
- Read more in DOT’s [press release](#) and view the 2024 NOFO [here](#).
- **Applications are due February 28, 2024**, and selections will be announced no later than June 27, 2024.

## Ecology Affordable Housing Cleanup Grant – March 6, 2024

Applications for Ecology’s [Affordable Housing Cleanup Grants](#) (AHCG) will open soon. Three types of remedial action grants will be offered in the 2025-2027 biennium:

- Oversight remedial action grants and loans – to help local governments investigate and clean up contaminated properties with Ecology or EPA supervision.
- Area-wide groundwater investigation grants – to help local governments investigate potential groundwater contamination that may be widespread.
- Safe drinking water action grants – to help local governments provide safe drinking water to people living in areas affected by environmental contamination.

Applications will open January 17 and close **March 6, 2024**.

## Ecology Drought Planning and Preparedness Grants – due March 14, 2024

Ecology is offering \$1.8 million in grant funding in Summer 2024 for the development of local drought preparedness plans to increase local drought resiliency and water supply security.

- No matching funds are required.
- Applications close March 14, 2024.
- An online applicant workshop (a [recording](#) and [presentation](#) are posted) was held on January 9.
- Funding guidance has been [posted](#).
- For more information and to request a pre-application meeting with Ecology staff, visit the program [webpage](#).

## Washington Public Works Board offers broadband funding – Applications due March 22, 2024

The Washington State Public Works Board (PWB) is currently offering \$15.8 million in grants and low-interest loans for broadband construction projects. Projects in distressed counties are eligible for 30% grant and 70% loan funding until funds are exhausted. Eligible applicants include local governments; Tribes; nonprofit organizations; cooperative associations; multiparty entities comprised of public entity members; limited liability corporations organized to expand broadband access; and incorporated businesses or partnerships. The pre-application deadline was **January 4, 2024**, with a 30-day objection period to follow, and final applications are due **March 22, 2024**. Learn more and apply [here](#).

PWB encourages potential applicants to take advantage of the virtual application workshop scheduled in February 2024. No registration is required, and attendance is not required to submit a funding application. Workshops will be recorded and posted later at [www.pwb.wa.gov](http://www.pwb.wa.gov).

- Feb. 15 workshop, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m. ([Zoom meeting](#))



## Highlighted Events

### Ports and Maritime Day, held February 1-2 in Olympia

This is your chance to engage directly in the Legislative Process. You'll gain a firsthand perspective on Olympia policymaking, and your legislators will see how much you care! Port members attend meetings with their legislative delegations, WPPA arranges a Friday morning breakfast with legislative leadership from both parties, and on Thursday we will jointly host a reception with our friends from the Washington Maritime Federation.

The agenda for Port Day and the Ports and Maritime Day reception are included on our website, [linked here](#).

*We hope to see you all in Olympia on February 1 and 2!*

### Save the Dates for 2024 Events

Further event details for 2024 are coming soon. Registration typically opens about 8 weeks in advance. In the meantime, mark your calendars for these upcoming meetings and events!

- 2024 State Legislative Session, opens January 8 in Olympia, closes March 12
- 2024 Spring Meeting, May 15-17 at Skamania Lodge, Stevenson
- 2024 Finance & Administration Seminar, June 26-28 at AC Hotel by Marriott, Vancouver, WA
- 2024 Directors Seminar, July 11-12 at McMenamins Kalama Harbor Lodge, Kalama
- Commissioners Seminar, July 22-24 at Courtyard by Marriott – Richland Columbia Point

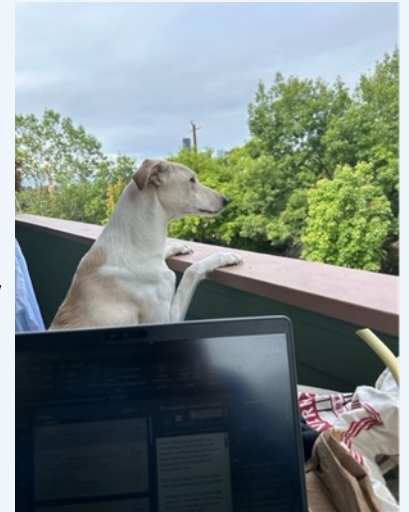
## As Arthur Sees It

### *Notes from the Executive Director and his dog*

Even through driving freezing rain, it's hard to be too down on civic engagement in the political process when you see a bus load of school kids pull up to the diagonal avenues leading from the Tivoli Fountain past the Capitol, red-faced children streaming out with an explosion of noise and energy and pouring into the halls of power, with none of the jaded cynicism that hunches over so many of us in suits and ties and heels. We pop umbrellas and turn them against the wind, grumbling about bills that died and testimony that was ignored. They rejoice at the Rotunda Tour, they charm committees with remote testimony, and they remind us all that once we were innocent and optimistic.

These are the reflections of a lobbyist ten days into a short and frenetic sixty-day legislative session, and as I type them, I find myself even kind of meaning them! Just when I thought I was beaten down by the Legislative process, now embarking on my ninth session lobbying the Legislature, I find a new well of hope and positivity, and I find it through careful observation of the members of the public who find their way into this policymaking process.

Experiencing the 2024 Session through new eyes, in part through conversations with Carly who is diving headfirst into her first session, having arrived last April from Wisconsin, the process here in Olympia can seem opaque and inaccessible. The rules are byzantine and often modified on the fly; the committee schedules are modified moments before hearings; amendment deadlines are set and then reset, and the people with the most access to the policymakers are those of us who sit in offices just a few blocks from the capitol.



How impressive, then, are members of our general population who make their way to Olympia to make their voices heard; who wait for hours on Zoom to testify remotely to a line in the state budget that they think will impact their community; who take a half day off from work or school to come and “petition their government for a redress of grievances,” to quote our founding documents? Take it from this special interest advocate, even as we try to get the business of ports done, I am proud of the public who provide their perspective to this legislative assembly.

This leads me, in a roundabout and rambling way, to Port Day 2024. You are not just your average public—you’ve been elected or hired to represent the public in leading and managing their local port district. Your input to the Legislature is informed by your work or elected experience. But still, compared with the opinion of a jaded trade association executive, your input is worth its weight in gold when you’re sitting across from your lawmaker in their Olympia office providing honest-to-god feedback on a bill or a budget.

You come to Olympia not in buses and not as school kids, but still you come from the far-flung corners of the state where tidings of Olympia legislation are often welcomed with groans. You come to tell your legislative delegation that their work matters to you, that you’re listening, that you care. This gives us, the WPPA, the power to echo your words once Port Day has come and gone. To point to the perspective that you’ve taken the time to share.

This is what I look forward to, with Port Day two weeks forward in the outlook. Breakfast, banter, port visitors, and pointed political advocacy, from the people who really know what it will mean to their community.

See you on February 1 and 2!

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