



WASHINGTON PUBLIC PORTS ASSOCIATION

2018 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Washington Public Ports Association 2018 Legislative Agenda

PRIORITY ISSUES

Public Works Contracting: The State Auditor's Office has advised local governments that they do not have statutory authority to enter into on-call contracts, also sometimes referred to as unit-price contracting. The PUD's passed a bill in 2017 to modify their governing statutes and allow for this. That bill could be used as a template for ports. Other local governments (i.e. cities) will also look to achieve a fix this legislative session.

Modernizing Broadband Telecom Authority: Several ports have formed a working group to support modernization of telecom authority, develop business strategies, and seek federal support.

MTCA Funding Preservation: The 2017 Session was dominated by pressure to fund the state's K-12 obligations. Ports continued the effort to secure ongoing funding for remedial action grants and have significant needs that remain unmet.

ISSUES WPPA WILL SUPPORT

Aviation Airport Funding: Legislation proposing the Community Aviation Revitalization Board was proposed during the 2017 legislative session. The Board proposed a competitive loan program for revenue-generating projects at small GA airports. \$5 million to fund the program was proposed in the 2017 Capital Budget. The program and the proposed funding is part of a series of funding measures designed to overcome under-investment at the state's 134 GA airports.

Tourism Funding: The Washington Tourism Alliance, in conjunction with several legislators conducted several working groups prior to the 2017 session to discuss funding ideas for a statewide tourism marketing program. The work that evolved from this effort produced a bill which garnered moderate support.

CERB Funding/Reform: The WPPA has consistently supported funding for the Community Economic Revitalization Board in the form of additional funding for CERB loans and grants as well as increases in CERB technical staffing levels.

Port Worker Training: HB 1510 was proposed by the Port of Seattle in the last session to expand port district authority to contract with private non-profit entities to provide worker training programs.

Hatchery funding: We support increased state and Mitchell Act funding for salmon hatcheries because of the importance of the salmon fishery to both the commercial and recreational fishing industry.

Capital Projects: With no capital budget passed to date in 2017, ports have significant capital needs going unmet.

Air Quality Equipment: A technical fix is needed to RCW 53.08.040 to clarify that ports are allowed to operate pollution control facilities, including equipment and programs that improve air quality. The change does not expand the authority of ports, it simply corrects contradictory language in a manner consistent with legislative intent and long-standing practice.

Rural Economic Development: Rural Washington is not sharing equally in the benefits of the state's economic engine and the legislature needs to engage in a robust discussion on nurturing economic development for this often-ignored part of our region.

B&O Tax preference for Fishing Fleet Vessels: Revisiting recent legislative efforts to provide a preferential B&O tax rate for construction of fishing vessels and their components is challenging given the end-of-session veto of a broader B&O tax fix.

Preserving the Milwaukee Road Rail Corridor: The state acquired a cross-state rail corridor through bankruptcy/abandonment in the 1980's. The corridor has been used as a trail ever since. The state railbanking law that would allow portions of the corridor to be returned to active rail use (should it be needed) is set to sunset in 2019. Preserving the option to again use the corridor for train traffic would alleviate concerns about insufficient east/west rail capacity in the state. That concern was highlighted in the State Rail Plan and reinforced by the 2017 Marine Cargo Forecast.

ISSUES WPPA WILL WATCH

Piecemeal Carbon Policies Affecting Port Missions: Recent decisions affecting environmental permits at the Port of Kalama and the Millennium coal terminal undermine ports' mission to develop the economy of the state. At the Port of Kalama, the Shorelines Hearings Board denied a permit in a manner which forces all future project proponents, regardless of project type, to evaluate and mitigate for carbon emissions. No state guidance exists regarding the basis for this new requirement. In addition, based upon the impacts of new vessel and train traffic identified in the EIS, Ecology's Millennium decision creates a pathway for opponents to challenge the core of the port business model. Changes to the state's environmental laws are necessary to fix these problems and to end the damaging project-by-project evolution of state policy related to carbon emissions. WPPA will engage in the carbon policy development debate looking for opportunities to repair damage done by recent permit decisions.

OTHER ISSUES

Commissioner Districts: WPPA will not support efforts to change the governance model of the ports comprising the Northwest Seaport Alliance, if those efforts result in an imbalance of commissioners between those districts, or alter the commissioner district boundaries without a referendum by the citizens of the port districts.