



WASHINGTON PUBLIC PORTS ASSOCIATION

2025 Legislative Priority Setting

Aviation

Commercial Aviation Work Group: Commercial aviation in the Puget Sound continues to grow but there is insufficient capacity to support future growth. Several past planning efforts have failed to identify a solution and a work group established by budget proviso in 2023 will be sunset in June of 2025. WPPA will advocate for a more durable and effective process this session.

Accelerating Adoption of Unleaded AvGas: Adoption of no-lead fuel for GA aircraft has been slow. WPPA will seek opportunities to advance the transition through incentives and protect against mandates which create unsafe operating conditions at airports.

Community Aviation Revitalization Board (CARB) Funding: CARB provides loan funding for infrastructure at small GA airports. WPPA supports WSDOT's request for an additional \$5 million for the program aimed at creating a sustained, long term funding plan for the CARB program.

Sustainable Aviation Grant Program: This grant program, aimed at investing in airport infrastructure, is funded with Climate Commitment Act revenue. WPPA will seek to sustain this program and expand opportunities for airports interested in decarbonizing their operations.

Broadband

BEAD Program Match: \$1.2 billion in federal BEAD funding is allocated to Washington to bring "internet to all." WPPA supports the state's intent to provide \$200 million in matching funds. This funding will assist project proponents in building internet capacity across the state.

Economic Development

ADO Funding: Seven ports act as their county's Associate Development Organizations (ADO). Legislation in 2025 seeks to make modest changes to allocation levels and improve the resiliency of these important, albeit underfunded, economic development tools.

Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB): CERB is seeking maintenance level funding of \$75 million for the upcoming 2025-27 biennium. WPPA supports CERB as an effective funding tool for economic development.

MatchED Act 2.0: The Match Act passed the legislature in 2024 and funded tools to help local governments better compete for competitive federal funding. This legislation is intended to further leverage historic federal funding for important local infrastructure projects across the state.

Industrial Symbiosis Program: Commerce is proposing sustained funding of \$5 million per biennium for an ongoing Industrial Symbiosis Program designed to launch and fund circular economy grants.

Public Facilities District Taxing Authority: Public Facilities Districts work to create venues that attract visitors to their region and create economic growth. Ports are among the organizations that can partner with local governments to promote economic benefit to their communities by building these types of facilities. The facilities are paid for by the distribution of state sales tax money and the levy of parking and occupancy taxes. WPPA supports legislation to extend this taxing authority to ensure the continued solvency of these facilities.

Environment & Natural Resources

Model Toxic Control Act (MTCA): Nearly every community in Washington is benefiting from results driven by MTCA funding. More than 7,400 contaminated sites have been cleaned up with MTCA funds and collection authority since it became law in 1989 through the Hazardous Substance Tax (HST). The HST applies to more than 8,000 hazardous substances, including petroleum products and certain chemicals and pesticides. As more demands of the program funding continue each legislative session amid increasing capacity constraints and lower revenue, maintaining funding for long-term, large port cleanup projects is critical. WPPA will continue to advocate for full funding of port capital projects and continue to collaborate with stakeholders to maintain revenue from the Hazardous Substance Tax (HST) within the MTCA account where it can support things like the Remedial Action Grants that ports rely on to pursue complex environmental cleanups.

Industrial Stormwater General Permit (ISGP) 2025 Changes and Significant Port Impacts: WPPA will support our port members significantly impacted by the 2025 ISGP changes and vast expansion of coverage. This may include any policy changes that would help ports come into compliance and where possible, additional resources for infrastructure changes. **The 2025 ISGP was not published as this document was drafted, these changes are anticipated through numerous public hearings and meetings with the Dept of Ecology.*

Derelict Structure Removal Program – Tire Reefs: Tire reefs are artificial reefs created in the 1970-80s that were used through the WA Dept of Fisheries to help bring in more fish and wildlife around piers. The tires are heavy and imbedded in the sand and other debris. Tire reefs release bits of rubber, plastics, and metals into water as they break apart, and are now reported to be environmental hazards that ports are being required to remove. In 2023 the Legislature Passed [SSB 5433](#) creating the Derelict Structure Removal Program. Under this program, the Dept of Natural Resources is working to survey and remove a couple tire reef piles in the Puget Sound. WPPA will advocate for the continuance of this program, support increased funding and efforts for tire reef removals. It is important that ports are eligible for additional resources in this program.

Waterway Health and Salmon Recovery: WPPA supports waterway health initiatives and state salmon recovery efforts in a holistic watershed approach. Additional support for an approach that includes adequate resources for culvert barrier removal as a pathway to increase habitat recovery. WPPA will advocate for state salmon recovery through a lens that supports economic development, environmental stewardship, and local port community needs.

Energy

Clean Energy Siting and Permitting: As decarbonization and renewable energy demand increases, a sustainable clean energy economy needs an efficient permitting process. WPPA supports a more effective siting process that supports clean energy projects in our communities and does not continue to increase costs or delay projects further. Improvements could include further process efficiencies for

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energy projects of “statewide significance”, clearly identify acceptable ghg emission mitigation measures, consolidate and improve outreach requirements, and consider SEPA categorical exemptions for certain projects.

Port Electrification Grant Program: This grant program was created at WSDOT and funded with \$26.5M in the 2024 legislative session through Climate Commitment Act funds. This grant program supports 11 ports to electrify their operations which will collectively plan to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by more than 140,000 metric tons over the next 10 years. WPPA will continue to advocate for the continuance of the grant program and support additional funding to increase access and deployment of important decarbonization projects.

Energy Supply Challenges: Ports are drivers of economic development and are crucial stakeholders in advancing the deployment of clean energy technologies. However, ports are facing increasing delays in aligning competitiveness and economic growth with the needs of energy and utility providers. In some cases, utilities are unable to provide the necessary energy to support new business opportunities or recruitment, including clean energy production and manufacturing projects, which require substantial power. WPPA will advocate for prioritizing infrastructure investments, increasing energy planning, and supporting cost-effective energy solutions so ports can enhance their ability to both provide economic benefit and environmental stewardship through decarbonization efforts.

Governance

Public Records Act: WPPA is supportive of modest changes to the Public Records Act to ensure ports and other small local governments are not burdened with legal fees and fines associated with attempting to respond to record requests in good faith. WPPA is exploring legislation that would require records request to be submitted to the appropriate records officer to promote prompt responses and compliance with the PRA.

Property Tax Cap: WPPA is part of a coalition of local governments that supports legislation to increase the 1% property tax cap. Local governments face significant challenges in generating sufficient revenue to meet the increasing costs of public services. With costs often rising faster than 1% annually due to inflation and other factors, the cap restricts their ability to maintain service levels. Despite having access to other sources of revenue, many ports feel the impact of the property tax cap.

Land Use and Management

Growth Management Act: Last year, a port member brought forward legislation to allow for development of “natural resource based” industrial facilities outside the urban grown boundary in a county. WPPA supported this as did the Association of Counties, and the issue is anticipated to return to the Legislature. WPPA will advocate for this reasonable and narrowly tailored amendment to keep our agricultural economies efficient and productive.

Natural Disaster Prevention and Response – Wildfires: Many ports serve as hubs in collaboration with the Dept of Natural Resources for natural disaster response. WPPA will advocate for resources for efforts to help our port districts serve this critical role and support community resiliency efforts and recovery from wildfires. Any additional resources or support for these efforts also help our port districts serve this critical role for the DNR.

Transportation

Transportation Funding: Washington state is falling short on funding for critical transportation infrastructure. Funding sources, like the state's gasoline and diesel taxes have been increased but more vehicles than ever evade the fuel taxes because they are more fuel efficient or are electric and simply don't use gasoline at all. WPPA supports prioritizing projects long overdue for completion and increasing funding for systemwide maintenance and preservation needs.

Green Farms to Green Ports Initiative: WPPA supports this strategy designed to increase the competitiveness of Washington's ports by strengthening the export of Washington goods to the global marketplace. Investments to smooth supply chains, incentivize and anchor cargo owners to choose Washington and increase the state's footprint in key global markets.

Rail Modernization Tax Credit: This tax preference legislation provides board support for rail infrastructure including a state Sales and Use Tax exemption for ports while short line operators would have the option to apply the tax credit to several different tax obligations.

Road Usage Charge (RUC): The Legislature is evaluating the implementation of a Road Usage Charge designed to ensure electric and hybrid vehicles are paying for the maintenance and preservation of Washington's roads. WPPA will support the implementation of a RUC program that focuses on those not currently paying the gas tax.

Supply Chain Competitiveness Infrastructure Program (SCCIP): WPPA will propose legislation focused on dedicated funding for port and port-adjacent projects which have few other funding options but have critical importance to the state's supply chains.

Truck Parking Strategies: The Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board is due to make recommendations on projects that could have a meaningful benefit to the trucking industry by increasing the amount of space available for truckers needing to meet hours of service rest regulations while driving along Washington's busiest truck corridors. WPPA supports efforts to improve safety and access for truck drivers.

Delaying Washington State implementation of California's Advanced Clean Trucks Rule: The Washington Trucking Association has raised concerns about the ability of the state's trucking industry to comply with Advanced Clean Truck rules established in California and adopted in Washington by statute. Ports strongly support decarbonization efforts including transitioning the state's dray truck fleet to zero emissions. However, the current rule is seen as too far too fast and does not factor in significant cost hurdles, slower technological adoption and insufficient regional charging capacity necessary to support decarbonization.

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Washington Public Ports Association

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