



May 12, 2025



*Stacks of lumber at the Sierra Pacific Industries facility at the Port of Centralia (photos courtesy of the Port).*

## May Updates at WPPA

As May arrives in Olympia, the Ports Building is quiet once again – with the April 27<sup>th</sup> adjournment of the legislature providing a needed respite to the WPPA advocacy team and the many advocates and lobbyists who have offices in our building. We brought workers in right away to replace antiquated fluorescent light bulbs, and we will quickly embark on a project to repair the parking lot asphalt, reseal, and eventually repaint. Next time you're in town, whether it's for Port Day or for any other Olympia trips you have planned, come and see us!

But there is no rest for the weary, or the wicked, depending on your perspective – and work kept apace for WPPA staff and our lobbyist building tenants alike. For those in the political advocacy world, *sine die* (the Latin term describing the legislature's adjournment without a date set for their return) means letters to the Governor asking that he *not* veto priority bills – or asking him to veto whole sections of the budget. Then there are the bill signings, the thank-you cards, the debriefs, and the scramble to prepare for next year.

As policy debates raged in the final weeks of the Olympia legislative session, those of us in the port world also spent considerable time in the past month answering questions about international trade dynamics – and their potential ramifications for ports in Washington state. A viral internet post suggested that the Port of Seattle was a “ghost town,” and that post went so far and wide that our ED heard about it from his mother-in-law in Virginia! The Northwest Seaport Alliance shared some [facts and forecasts with local media](#) to address that specific story; and the [Port of Everett was featured in a piece just last week](#) about the impacts at their facility, especially for the people working there. Meanwhile, [port leaders in other parts of the state joined members of the DC congressional delegation](#) to assess what this might mean for main streets in Washington.

The discussion goes far beyond our port terminals, and WPPA staff were in touch with our partners at the [Association of Washington Business, who are asking for responses to their 2025 Tariff Impact Survey](#). Keep your eyes on our News Roundup for more stories like those above and for more opportunities to get involved – the conversation around tariffs and trade will continue, as more is understood about how Washington’s economy will react.

For your Association staff at WPPA World HQ, past the post-session scramble, and beyond the talk of global trade trends, the scramble is much more immediate: we have a Spring Conference to host, and it’s nearly upon us! We are excited to be seeing many of you in Spokane in just a few days’ time, with attendance numbers already indicating that you’re excited to make the trip as well. Last time we were in Spokane we had fabulous weather, engaging speakers, and near-record attendance for a Spring Conference. We are on track for the same again – with topics ranging from drought and energy innovation, to the recently-completed Marine Cargo Forecast and the continuing conversation about tariff impacts in the state. Come for the “Rise and Shine” walk with your WPPA ED, and stay for another great series of Port Reports, featuring the Ports of Whitman County, Othello, and the Northwest Seaport Alliance as it celebrates ten years since its formation.

And if you can’t make the Spring Meeting in Spokane, there are plenty of other opportunities to engage with WPPA in the coming months. [Consult our Events page](#), on our shiny new website (mentioned in this intro section now for the third month running), and you’ll note that **June 4<sup>th</sup> we kick off our “Port Academy Series” in Kalama**, with the second installment set for August 14<sup>th</sup> in Wenatchee with the Chelan Douglas Regional Port Authority. These are new educational offerings intended to give a full look at a port’s operations, in a casual atmosphere with attendees from ports around the state.

For all of you who keep our books clean, **registration is open for the Finance and Administration Seminar, June 25-27<sup>th</sup> in Walla Walla**, and the Directors and Commissioners Seminars to follow not long after. We also have a Lunch and Learn in the works, so keep your eyes on our website and your email inboxes for more information about upcoming opportunities for continued collaboration and port partnership.

See you all in Spokane!

### [Port Spotlight: The Port of Centralia Continues to Diversify and Build Opportunities](#)



*The Port of Centralia administrative offices, located across from Park I.*



Located halfway between the major cities of Seattle and Portland, the city of Centralia is a vital station in the commercial artery that runs through the I-5 corridor. For the past 39 years the Port of Centralia has been working to diversify the city's economy while increasing Centralia's prominence as an important logistical link between Seattle, Portland and beyond.

Centralia has always been a commercial town. Founded as a railroad and timber town in 1872, Centralia was located perfectly to serve the Union Pacific, Northern Pacific, Milwaukee, and Great Northern Railroad companies. Its proximity to the Cascade mountains allowed it to become a logging hotspot, and the timber industry became the city's main economic driver for years.

Beginning in the 1980s with the eruption of Mt. St. Helens and continuing throughout a decade fraught with ecological controversy around the spotted owl, Centralia's timber industry took a big blow. In 1986, the town voted to found the Port of Centralia to diversify the town's economic prospects and to ensure that community members could find stable, meaningful, high-paying jobs in the town's industrial core.

The port got to work quickly. "It took a year or two to collect tax revenue," said Kyle Heaton, Executive Director at the Port of Centralia. "But we found suitable ground, and our first tenant, Rogers Machinery, is still here today."



*Rogers Machinery continues to operate in Park I.*

From there the port focused on their first industrial park. "My predecessor did tremendous work chasing down every grant available," he said of Wendy Rader, the port's first Executive Director. "She built a very nice base of buildings owned by the port and did an amazing job getting us off the ground."

In 2000, the Port identified Park II, located north of Centralia. Park II hosts 9 tenants, mostly Fortune 500 companies. Sierra Pacific Industries, Walmart, Michael's, and Stihl Northwest all make use of the space, taking full advantage of the site's proximity to I-5.

The port announced another project in 2012 after the city conducted a gateway study of marginal lands. At the urging of the city, the port began a 42-parcel assemblage which would become Park 3, or Centralia Station. After years of cleanup and permitting, the site was brought to market, and in 2019, WinCo Foods was announced as the future Park 3 anchor tenant. There has been a tremendous response to this announcement, with several additional future tenants already planning to fill spaces around WinCo Foods.

"[WinCo] has been quite a boon," Heaton said. He pointed out that the store provides the community with 200 new jobs, noting the employee-owned company's emphasis on the well-being of its employees.

Also in 2019, the port was able to attract United Natural Foods (UNFI) to a 1.3 million square foot warehouse in Park I, which provided Centralia with an additional 900 jobs.

“The port’s been methodical,” Heaton said. “Not everyone who has knocked got in; the worst thing we can do is bring in an employer who won’t be around for long. We’ve tried to take a slow and methodical approach, and so far, we’ve been lucky.”

Near UNFI and Rogers Machinery there are also thriving smaller businesses. 4Legz, a company that makes all-natural dog treats, was started in a garage and now leases space from the port for national distribution. Dick’s Brewing Company, another local business that began in the garage, makes use of their building in Park I for their distribution across the United States.

Attracting these businesses has provided the community with stable jobs and the city with much-needed revenue. The Port of Centralia very clearly demonstrates this connection on their [website](#), where they show how many dollars each industrial park contributes to local schools, libraries, fire departments and more.

“The port is the only taxing district that creates its own revenue,” Heaton said. “We bring in the tax base, and were the port not here everyone else’s property taxes would be much higher. When you’ve got a school district that has failed levies, it becomes clear that the tax base is so critical.”



*A tanker truck from one of the Port’s green energy tenants hauls diesel exhaust fluid for lower emissions distribution throughout the Northwest.*

As the port looks to the future, one major project stands out: a partnership with Logistics Property Company, which is developing a parcel of land north of the port’s Park I to construct a new warehouse. The building will be 605,000 square feet, and the port is working with Logistics Property Company and Lewis County on a road extension for the site.

Partnerships like this are important, Heaton said, to ensure that tax dollars are spent responsibly, particularly with grant money drying up nationally and the state government tightening belts.

That creativity allows them to be, as Heaton described, “the developer of last resort. Ideally, we want to be a partner with private industry, so we can build things and stretch tax dollars. Where we really excel is stepping up and making the move getting a project to completion.”

Heaton believes that, despite economic uncertainty, the port is on the right track. “We have visionary commissioners, we’re aimed on a great trajectory, and we think our partnerships will pay a lot of dividends in the years to come.”

## Legislative Spotlight: Highlights from the Final 2025 Legislative Report

As we have reached the end of the legislative session, we have pulled together a comprehensive report that highlights all of these developments and outlines what they mean for Washington’s ports and their local communities. [Check out the full report for details on budget highlights, policy wins, and what’s ahead in 2026.](#) We have included an abridged version of the report below.

### 2025 Final Legislative Report

The 2025 Legislative Session was a long, 105-day session that began Monday, January 13, 2025, and concluded on time, Sunday, April 27<sup>th</sup>. It was an action-packed session that saw large Democratic majorities in both chambers take on some enduring issues – like housing supply and affordability; K-12 school funding; and public safety – while at the same time tackling a budget gap that was estimated at between \$12 and \$15 billion dollars going into session. All through session, the negotiation of the three budgets and the push-pull between deep cuts to existing programs and the prospect of raising new revenue was a theme that colored most interactions on the Capitol Campus, from the Governor’s inaugural address to day-to-day committee activity.

Democrats continued to control the agenda in Olympia with majorities of 60 percent in both the House (59-39) and Senate (30-19) in 2025. These large majorities enabled the Democrats to pass bills without needing the votes of every single member of their caucus, a dynamic which played out frequently on votes related to revenue and policy bills that had strong opposition.

1,949 bills were introduced, and 431 bills passed the legislature and have now been sent to the Governor to be signed into law. As a reminder, during the two-year biennium, all bills that do not pass during the 105-day session, are technically *alive* again for the 60-day session. While not all will receive further consideration, more than 1,000 bills from 2025 will still be eligible to be advanced next year.

Following the adjournment of session, the Governor has twenty days to take action on bills, that means between now and May 20<sup>th</sup>, he will review bills passed by the legislature and choose one of four options: 1) sign the bill into law; 2) veto the entire bill; 3) partially veto the bill by removing entire sections – the Governor does not have line-item veto authority which means removing sentences or words is not allowed; or 4) take no action – meaning the bill will become law without signature. The Governor released [this statement](#) as to how he will proceed in reviewing the budgets passed by the Legislature.

2025	Bills Introduced	Passed the Legislature
House	1107	238
Senate	842	193
Total for 2025	1949	431

### Update on Bills Related to the 2025 WPPA Legislative Priorities

As noted above, bill action from the Governor will conclude on May 20<sup>th</sup>. We have also created a full report on bills related to our 2025 Legislative that were considered by the legislature. This report is an update to our mid-session report that was presented to our Legislative Committee on March 14<sup>th</sup>. [Click here to view our updated report.](#)

### Conclusion

With the 2025 session now behind us, it is important to acknowledge the fiscal environment in which lawmakers were operating. Faced with a significant budget deficit, the Legislature was forced to make tough choices between cutting essential services and raising new revenue. Ultimately, the biennial budget passed includes substantial tax increases on both businesses and individuals.

Looking toward next year, the 2026 Legislature will again have new members joining its ranks, and it will confront some of the same budget headwinds. Several appointed legislators are facing serious challenges in special elections to remain in their seats and fulfill the remainder of the terms of their predecessors. The Governor will have one more year under his belt, and he will have to write his own budget proposal this fall.



These changes come amid broader economic headwinds, including ongoing trade disruptions and tariffs that continue to impact Washington's trade-dependent economy. Additionally, uncertainty at the federal level regarding future funding for programs such as Medicaid, FEMA grant programs, environmental programs, and more adds to the overall unpredictability.

Through it all, WPPA will continue to engage you to ensure our advocacy reflects your values. Together we can strengthen our state's economic foundation and ensure long-term prosperity for the communities we serve.

The Washington State Legislature will convene on January 12, 2026, for a 60-day session.

See you over the interim!

## Knowing the Waters

This month's Knowing the Waters, written by Tim Schermetzler of CSD Attorneys at Law, explores the Open Public Meetings Act, presents the case study of West v. Walla Walla City Council 1, and shares a list of best practices for ports to uphold the OPMA principles of transparency, public participation, and government accountability. Read more in this month's [Knowing the Waters](#)!

## Grants and Resources for Ports

Check out the latest grants and other funding resources on the WPPA website!

As part of our website redesign, we have updated the [grants and other resources page](#) on our website. To help you find the latest and greatest, we have reorganized the layout and added banners to help you find the programs that are accepting applications at this moment. Moving forward, you can expect it to be updated monthly as new application periods go live, so check back frequently and keep it saved in your bookmarks.

## Final Legislative Budget Updates (and how they impact grants)

In our [Final 2025 Legislative Report](#) you will find a side-by-side chart comparison of the three biennial state budgets: Operating, Transportation, and Capital, as well as some of the key tax proposals from this session. Several funding opportunities relevant to ports are included in these charts, and we encourage you to read through them and reach out with questions to [Carly Michiels](#) or [James Cockburn](#).

## MARAD Small Shipyard Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity – applications due May 15, 2025

Ports with small shipyards (in a single location with less than 1,200 production employees) may be interested in the [MARAD Small Shipyard Grant Program](#), which will make up to \$8.75 million available. Eligible projects include capital improvement projects enhancing ship construction, repair, or reconfiguration work, as well as in-house maritime training and skills development programs.

The applicant must be the operating company of the shipyard facility. Cost-sharing of 25 percent is required, which cannot come from other federal sources or in-kind contributions. Read the [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) here on the DOT website. Companies interested in applying are encouraged to reach out to [Xochitl Castañeda](#), MARAD Pacific Northwest and Alaska Gateway Director.

## Commerce BEAD Program, Second Round – applications due May 16, 2025

The Washington State Department of Commerce is providing approximately \$1.2 billion to help expand broadband access to unserved or underserved communities across the state. Eligible projects will provide at least 100 megabits per second download and 20 megabits per second upload speeds and may include fiber optic installation. A 25 percent match is required; however, some local governments may receive funding to cover the match requirement. Applications are due by May 16, 2025. To learn more and read the guidelines, visit [Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program](#).

## USFWS Coastal System Conservation Grants – applications due May 30, 2025

A total of \$6 million will be made available to provide technical and financial assistance to applicants to restore and protect fish and wildlife habitats under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) [Coastal Program](#). Awards may be up to \$500,000, and eligible projects will be developed collaboratively with program staff. Applicants must contact a local program office before developing or applying. No match is required. Applications are due May 30, 2025.

Washington has three USFWS Conservation Offices; find contact information for your [local office here](#).

### RCO Boating Facilities Program – applications due June 5, 2025

The Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) is accepting applications for their Boating Facilities Program, which will provide funding to buy, develop, and renovate facilities for motorized boats. Grants will provide up to \$1 million, with a match requirement of 25 percent. [Learn more at RCO's website.](#)

### Ecology Independent Remedial Action Grants – applications due June 18, 2025

The Washington State Department of Ecology Independent Remedial Action Grant (RAG) program will provide between \$300,000 and \$450,000 to local governments who have:

1. Completed an independent cleanup through the Voluntary Cleanup Program, and
2. Received a determination of no further action from Ecology.

Funding can cover remediation actions, engineering design, operations and the development of remedial action plans and reports. A total of \$700,000 has been made available for the 2023-2025 biennium. Applications are due by 5 p.m. on June 18. [Read more at Ecology's website.](#)

### WA Budget Update: no Integrated Planning Grants (IPGs) in this budget cycle

Ecology is prioritizing funding for the RAG project list before funding any other planning grants.

### DOE Community Energy Innovation Prize – applications due June 20, 2025

The US Department of Energy (DOE) is providing \$8.42 million in cash prizes and in-kind support in the second edition of their Community Energy Innovation Prize. Organizations dedicated to advancing clean energy, manufacturing, and transportation technologies in historically underrepresented communities are encouraged to apply. Awards will range from \$75,000 to \$100,000 across three tracks:

- **Clean Energy Ecosystem Track** (\$3.22 million): Renewable energy projects, energy efficiency initiatives, and grassroots innovation to accelerate community-centric clean energy programs.
- **Manufacturing Ecosystem Track** (\$2.6 million): Partnering with local industry and academic solutions to innovate in clean energy manufacturing, workforce development, and supply chain resilience.
- **Vehicles Ecosystem Track** (\$2.6 million): Enhancing community access to electric vehicles, charging infrastructure, alternative fuels, and other clean transportation solutions.

Applications are due by 2 p.m. on June 20.

### Ecology Flood Control Assistance Account – applications due June 30, 2025

Ecology is providing \$1.5 million to communities to develop comprehensive floodplain management plans and put actions and projects in place to mitigate local flood hazards. Eligible applicants include local governments and special purpose districts, with a ceiling of \$500,000 in awards per county. Eligible projects include writing or updating a comprehensive flood hazard management plan; feasibility, mapping, and technical studies; permitting, outreach and public communications; matching federal funding; and emergency flood response and recovery. To learn more, visit the [Flood Control Assistance Account program](#) page.

- A 25 percent match for planning projects and a 20 percent match for emergency flood response projects is required.
- Prospective applicants must fill out a Notice of Intent to Apply form prior to applying.
- Applications are due June 30, 2025.

### RCO Boating Infrastructure Grant Program – applications due June 5 - July 17, 2025

RCO is accepting applications for their Boating Infrastructure Grant Program, which will provide a total of \$2.2 million for the development and renovation of boating facilities that target recreational boats 26 feet long and larger.

Ports, local agencies, tribes, nonprofits and private marinas are all encouraged to apply. The money can cover guest dock renovation, installing utilities on moorage docks, moorage dock and float construction, and boater education. [Learn more at RCO's website.](#)

- A 25 percent match is required.
- The pre-application is due June 5, 2025.
- The full application is due July 17, 2025.

### [MARAD Port Infrastructure Development Program – applications due September 10, 2025](#)

The Maritime Administration (MARAD) announced on May 2 that the deadline for the Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) has been extended to September 10, 2025, to align with updated guidance for the 2025 fiscal year. \$500 million will be made available to fund projects that, through enhanced port or related freight infrastructure, improve the safety, efficiency, or reliability of the movement of goods in urban and rural areas. Webinars will be scheduled soon to describe the application and scoring process, and we will share those in upcoming Manifests. In the meantime, you can view the opportunity [here](#) on Grants.gov by September 10, 2025.

### [EPA Thriving Community Grant Makers – accepted on a rolling basis](#)

The Environmental Protection Agency opened their Thriving Community Grantmakers Program on January 15 and are accepting applications on a rolling basis. The Grantmakers partner with community-based organizations from across a region to select partnerships and distribute funding. Funding is awarded in four different categories: Assessment projects, Planning projects, Development projects, and non-competitive fixed amounts. [Read more about how to apply here.](#) A [recorded webinar](#) on the program is available through the Center for Creative Land Recycling.

The Washington Climate Partnership is requesting public input on a new Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) from now through April. They are hosting a series of virtual meetings, which will cover each sector of the state economy. The final version of the CCAP will describe specific actions Washington can take in each sector to meet their climate goals. All meetings are open to the public. Learn more on the [WCP website](#).

### [Highlighted Events](#)

WPPA Spring Meeting: May 14-16, Historic Davenport Lodge in Spokane



WPPA is in Spokane this week for our [2025 Spring Meeting](#). Online registration is closed but you can register onsite for an additional fee, and you can still view our event [agenda here on our website](#). We hope to see you in Spokane!

[Lunch and Learn Webinar – Tax Increment Financing \(TIF\) – June 3 at 12:00 p.m.](#)

We hope you will join us on June 3<sup>rd</sup> at 12:00 pm for our next Lunch and Learn webinar on Tax Increment Financing! The WPPA Communications Committee has put together a great lineup of presenters who are looking forward to sharing their experience on this topic. If you want to learn an effective communication strategy, what pitfalls to watch out for, and when is the proper time to engage with the public, then this webinar is for you! Please [click here to register](#) and if you have any questions you can reach out to [Mandy Lill](#).



## Inaugural Port Academy Series: June 4 at the Port of Kalama



Attention port staff, registration is open for our first-ever Port Academy Series event! We are offering you an opportunity to learn from one another through hands-on, port led forums. This event is taking place 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. on June 4<sup>th</sup> and is hosted by the Port of Kalama. We have filled all 25 spots, but we are keeping a waitlist in case of cancellations. You can find more information and the waitlist registration link [here on our website](#). If you have any questions, please reach out to [James Cockburn](#) at WPPA.

## Finance & Administration Seminar, June 25 – 27 at the Marcus Whitman Hotel in Walla Walla



Registration is now open for the 2025 Finance & Administration Seminar. Please plan to join us next month for this informative event! You must make hotel reservations by May 27<sup>th</sup> to get our guaranteed rates, but our room block is booking up fast and we may sell out before then! You can find the hotel information on the [event FAQ page](#) on our website. You can also [click here to view the agenda](#) and please be sure to reach out to [Mandy Lill](#) if you have any questions or if you would like to inquire about being a sponsor. Please register by May 28<sup>th</sup> for the early bird registration rate. After that the rate will increase and you will have until June 18<sup>th</sup> to register online.

## Save the Dates: 2025 WPPA Event Calendar

- Directors Seminar: July 9-11 at the Sleeping Lady Mountain Resort, Leavenworth
  - *Registration opening this week!*
- Commissioners Seminar: July 21-23 at the Semiahmoo Resort, Blaine
- Environmental Seminar: September 25-26 at the Alderbrook Lodge, Union
- Small Ports Seminar: October 23-24 at Campbell's Resort, Chelan
- New Commissioners Seminar: November 18 - 19 at the Marriott Tacoma Downtown
- Annual Meeting: November 19 - 21 at the Marriott Tacoma Downtown



*Ophelia enjoying a stroll around the capital campus*

## As Ophelia Sees It

### *Notes from the Deputy Director and His Dog*

Tariffs have had a profound impact on Washington State's economy, particularly due to its heavy reliance on international trade. Tariffs, which are taxes paid by the importer of goods upon arrival in the US, have resulted in increased costs for many goods, including, as an example, building and repairing bridges across Washington. Retaliatory tariffs, taxes a foreign country places on our goods in response to US-initiated tariffs, have suppressed export prices for Washington-grown agricultural products and made Boeing aircraft more expensive for foreign buyers.

Despite these challenges, reports that marine terminal operations at the Northwest Seaport Alliance in both Seattle and Tacoma have become a "ghost town" are misleading, as mentioned in our intro. Although the viral [video](#) recently circulated claimed the port was nearly deserted, data from the Northwest Seaport Alliance (NWSA) contradicts this narrative. In fact, cargo volumes have increased so far in 2025, with an 18% rise reported in March compared to the previous year. This surge is partly due to shippers fast-tracking orders to avoid anticipated tariff hikes. While the port has experienced fluctuations, it remains a vital anchor to Washington State's economy and a key part of the global supply chain.

At the heart of the rumor is the 145% tariff on many Chinese goods, which went into effect on April 9. While this tariff will have a dramatic impact on our ability to purchase everyday items produced in China, tariff policy has increasingly impacted Washington's economy since 2017. In 2024, the Biden Administration increased tariffs on steel and aluminum from 7.5% to 25% and on electric vehicles from 25% to 100%. While these tariffs also increase costs, what's driving current rumors is the significant fluctuations in tariff policies, which have introduced significant uncertainty. NWSA has seen disruptions in supply chains and increased costs for businesses. Exporters, especially those trading with China, have reported canceled shipments and halted new orders, leading to fears of long-term economic damage.

[Port of Seattle Commissioner Ryan Calkins](#) predicts a 40% reduction in cargo due to the recently announced Chinese tariffs. Calkins added the effects "will ripple out through the whole economy in our port communities." The ripple Calkins speaks of extends to longshore workers, truck drivers and into manufacturing and agricultural jobs across Washington. Washington's agricultural sector, which relies on timely and cost-effective export routes, has been hit hard. Tariffs have made Washington-grown products less competitive abroad, reducing demand and hurting farmers' bottom lines. Meanwhile, importers face higher costs, which are often passed on to consumers, contributing to inflation. The NWSA has warned that retaliatory tariffs from key trading partners like China, Japan, and South Korea could further erode the state's trade volume and economic stability.

In response to these developments, port leaders are advocating for more stable trade policies and increased federal support. They emphasize the need for long-term strategies to protect jobs and maintain Washington's competitiveness in global markets. Ports across Washington also continue to invest in infrastructure to adapt to changing trade dynamics, aiming to preserve their role as a gateway for international commerce. These efforts underscore the resilience of Washington's trade economy, even amid the turbulence of shifting tariff landscapes.

Washington Public Ports Association | 360.943.0760 | [www.washingtonports.org](http://www.washingtonports.org)