



WASHINGTON PUBLIC PORTS ASSOCIATION

THE MANIFEST

July 15, 2025



The Coupeville Wharf from the skies above Penn Cove. The Port of Coupeville recently completed a long-term, sweeping rehabilitation of the historic structure. Image credit: Port of Coupeville.

July Updates at WPPA

Greetings Summer seminar season comes to WPPA, and if you keep your eyes out, you're likely to see a conference or a spare staff member in your community one day soon! The newsletter below highlights not just a great port (read all about the Port of Coupeville!), but some great opportunities your port can take advantage of along with some great upcoming events you should join! If you read to the end, our Executive Director muses somewhat randomly on the benefits of a July spent winding his way across our beautiful state.

First, though, we owe you a brief recap of another great Finance and Administration Seminar, held at the end of June at the Marcus Whitman Hotel in Walla Walla. In another instance of what we think was record attendance, just under one hundred finance staff, executive directors, and commissioners gathered to gain in-depth understanding of the financial underpinnings of our ports' work. The event featured another informative appearance by the State Auditor's Office, daunting but inspiring cyber security conversations, and a remarkably interesting discussion of the state archives and record retention policies. With a surge of early momentum thanks to a highlight tour of Key Technologies, a longtime Port of Walla Walla tenant, there was no shortage of relevant and digestible content. Sincere thanks to our Finance and Administration Committee and our own Tasha Cilurso for ably developing and executing this event, and to the Port of Walla Walla for helping us host!

Next, we rolled up the WPPA banner and took it to a magical mountain lodge, the Sleeping Lady Resort in Leavenworth, where thirty port directors gathered for a two-day conference spent discussing issues of urgent importance to ports, like how local government are using artificial intelligence in their operations, and innovative approaches to public

financing. The group was treated to a comprehensive tour of the Chelan Douglas Regional Port Authority (CDRPA), and got to spend time at another port gem, the Pybus Market. No longer a port property, it was developed by the Port of Chelan and still centers the community in downtown Wenatchee. Credit to Mandy Lill for steering this unwieldy ship of port directors, and huge thanks to the Chelan Douglas Regional Port Authority for hosting.

Our Commissioners now head for Semiahmoo Resort in Blaine, and if you read this and think “Oh no, I haven’t registered,” never fear for it’s not too late, and [we’d love to see you!](#) The commissioners will hear from maritime workforce leaders about various approaches to workforce development in that sector and beyond and will welcome back erstwhile General Counsel Frank Chmelik (ret.), who will join our current General Counsel Tim Schermetzler to talk about comprehensive planning and legal updates to the port election statute.

For anyone who hasn’t heard, the standard seminar slate has now been augmented with a new offering: the Port Academy Series, which debuted to great effect in Kalama in June. Now we head east, with the CDRPA hosting this port-led educational offering at its offices in Wenatchee on August 14. There is still space, so we hope you can send staff or bring yourself – it’s open to all, and it’s a great chance for up-and-coming port staff or seasoned directors to get an up-close look at how ports around the state execute their missions. [Sign up now, and we’ll see you in a month!](#)

With all this action, we continue to advance other important initiatives, with the Legislative Committee now meeting regularly, the Marina Committee and Environmental Committees pushing ahead and getting our members together, and with upcoming meetings of our Aviation, Trade and Transportation, and Economic Development committees as well.

Stay in touch with us at WPPA and sign up for an upcoming event or tell us about any we’re missing. Happy reading, and WPPA will see you soon!

Port Spotlight: Stewards of history: Port of Coupeville preserves, enlivens facilities for public benefit



The barn at Greenbank Farm. Image credit: Port of Coupeville.

Right in the center of Whidbey Island, the town of Coupeville is an idyllic and historic town with a port that works hard to ensure that history is preserved.

At the end of Coupeville's charming Front Street sits the Coupeville Wharf, which is celebrating its 120th anniversary on July 19. It's an unmistakable structure: a long wharf jutting out into the waters of Penn Cove with a bright red wooden building situated on top. For the past few decades, the Port of Coupeville has been its steward, and with recent improvements, the port will remain its steward for decades to come.

The Port of Coupeville is dedicated mainly to the preservation of the structures that make central Whidbey Island such a unique place. Its two major properties—the wharf and Greenbank Farm—are major drivers of tourism with powerful connections to the community. Each site houses small businesses that are important to the local economy, as well. Preservation of the century-old buildings at these properties can be an uphill battle. Time and the elements had taken their toll before the port began rehabilitating the wharf.

"When I got [to Coupeville] in 2017, the port had no money for maintenance," said Port Executive Director Chris Michalopoulos. Though the port collected a tax levy, without any other revenue sources these funds weren't quite enough to operate the port as well as maintain even one of their properties. The wharf, as a result, had fallen into disrepair.

"We were running out of time," Michalopoulos said. One day he stood at the end of Front Street and snapped a photo of the wharf building under a king tide, missing siding and a portion of its roof.

It was clear that the port had to act quickly to save the wharf. Michalopoulos secured funding for rehabilitation, applied for grants, and established an Industrial Development District (IDD) in 2020. "The IDD was the turning point," Michalopoulos said. The new funding provided by this economic development tool enabled the port to hire staff, bring in project managers, and begin rehabilitation.



The Coupeville Wharf prior to rehabilitation. Image credit: Port of Coupeville.

The port replaced the wharf's piles and caps, as well as the roof, water and sewer lines, fuel tanks, siding, and seismic stabilization. While much of the structure has been replaced and repaired, Michalopoulos says that the port worked with contractors to "ensure as much of the original wood was saved as possible." Walk into the wharf building today and you'll be greeted by pictures of history going back almost 100 years and a marine mammal display, all framed against preserved wood.

This year marks the 120th anniversary of the Coupeville Wharf. The port is hosting an Anniversary Party on July 19, featuring live music, a beer garden, local food vendors, Penn Cove marine life exhibits, a timeline of the wharf's history, and crafts for kids. Notably, one of the last ships from Washington's historic "Mosquito Fleet," the Virginia V, will be docked at the wharf, just as it may have done a century prior. Visitors will be able to tour the historic ship and learn more about that important period in Washington's maritime history.

Next up on the port's list is continued rehabilitation of its other property, Greenbank Farm. The farm is a year older than the wharf, and the two sites share a long history. Until the 1950s, it was one of the largest dairy farms on the island, supplying locals as well as the region. While forts Ebey and Casey were being built near Coupeville, dairy products from Greenbank Farm were loaded onto Mosquito Fleet vessels and brought to the Coupeville Wharf to resupply the soldiers working at those sites.

The port took ownership of the farm in 1997. Over the years, they invested in lighting, roofing, climate control, and a new commercial kitchen to support local agriculture businesses and tourism.

While there's more to do at Greenbank Farm, it's been returned to beneficial use for the community, including its former role as a working farm. The farm also hosts seasonal community events that bring people together.

"Livestock are back out there – turkeys, chicken, highland cattle, we've got dahlia growers and Growing Veterans, a veterans' farming organization," Michalopoulos said. "It's alive, the place is bustling with events and tourism."



The pond at Greenbank Farm, with farm buildings in the background. The historic barns are a key part of the working farm and are also used for hosting community and private events. Image credit: Port of Coupeville.

Many ports include historic preservation as one of their focus areas, and the Port of Coupeville is unique in that it is currently their main role in the community. The port recently began a broadband project, their first project purely for economic development. But the wharf and farm are still prominent in the port's mission.

"Coupeville would not be Coupeville without the wharf," Michalopoulos said. "People come from all around the world to see the wharf. It's the second most photographed spot in Island County, and a stopping point to that historic structure is Greenbank Farm.

"It's amazing how many people come back year after year to see the farm and the wharf, and I have the pleasure of hearing people comment on the evolution," he said. "It means something to them. It means a lot when you see their happiness, the excitement on their face to see the changes."

Legislative Spotlight: The Economic Revenue Forecast Update and Its Impact on the Legislative Process

As ports begin preparing for the 2026 legislative session, it's important to pause a moment and consider how funding state government impacted our policy priorities during the 2025 legislative session and what that could mean going forward into 2026. Furthermore, the July Revenue Forecast continued to document a slower economic outlook for the state, reducing nearly \$1 billion in revenue expected over the next four years and putting the biennial Operating Budget in the red.

As a quick reminder, the 2025 Legislature passed over \$9 billion in new general fund revenue and landed on a biennial operating budget of \$77.9 billion, about 8.2% higher than the 2023-25 biennial operating budget. New revenue—around \$4 billion over six years—was also generated for the state transportation budget. This increase in transportation revenue is largely from an increase in gas and diesel taxes and fees like vehicle weight fees. New transportation revenue funds very few new priorities, instead focusing on shoring up large cost increases in existing projects.

The Economic Revenue Forecast Council released its June Forecast Update and was not positive for state revenue overall. Uncertainty, along with a general reduction in the state's labor force, have shaved \$940 million off the increased revenue in the State Operating Budget over the next four years. The June Update for the Transportation Revenue Forecast Council was brighter, mostly flat over that budget's time horizon. Project cost overruns, however, present a more concerning issue, with some recent projects coming in as much as 30% above design costs.

With this context, how should WPPA and your port be thinking about legislative requests and policy priorities for 2026? Here are a few thoughts:

- **Policy legislation should have a zero or near-zero fiscal impact:** As we saw during the 2025 Legislative Session, policy legislation with even small fiscal impacts was amended. Gone was anything that increased the cost of implementation or long-term state management, and most legislation with big fiscal notes simply did not advance. Any policy considerations for 2026 will need to continue to manage cost increases appropriately.
- **Infrastructure investments remained strong, but....:** While economic development programs at the Department of Commerce geared toward providing technical support or funding for operational programs saw deep cuts, infrastructure investments remained relatively strong. For instance, while the sector lead program designed to support the largest economic sectors saw a 50% cut in funding, the Community Economic Revitalization Board continued to receive full funding. While we continue to identify ways to support ports and their partners through targeted state assistance, we expect more pressure on infrastructure spending going forward. First, the Capital Budget included \$7.6 billion in new funding for investments, and while there is always additional capacity for additions in the second year of the biennium, big ticket items like meeting the state's obligation to correct fish passage barriers by 2030 has not been fully addressed. The recommendation is to continue to keep budget requests small. Effectively telling the story of the importance of your project remains critical. Invite impacted budget committee members to visit your project along with your district members. Also consider pre-messaging upcoming project requests (those one or two years out) so legislative members can balance needs within the district.
- **Continue planning for projects:** While times of economic uncertainty can lead to project delays and uncertain outcomes, it's important to continue to deploy best practices related to solid project planning. A strong project plan, positive return on investment criteria and advancing environmental work to make your project shovel-ready continue to be more important than ever. Don't let economic or funding uncertainty deter your port from employing these tools and positioning your project for the best chance at funding.

With all the discussion around belt-tightening, WPPA is also keeping this in mind as we prepare the 2026 Legislative Agenda. We are revisiting priorities, some that have been long held, that create new programs or provide tax incentives, to see if this is the right time to advance these priorities. Our goal is to have a more balanced portfolio of policy-focused priorities and funding requests going into the 2026 session.

As always, make sure we hear from you! Feel free to reach out to anyone on the WPPA Legislative Team to discuss thoughts you have as we prepare for 2026.

Knowing the Waters

In this month's edition of Knowing the Waters, Tim Schermetzler of CSD Attorneys at Law highlights some things to keep in mind as election season approaches and political candidates step up their campaigns. Tim reviews updates to election laws related to ports and provides guidance for port staff, Commissioners, and candidates around the use of public facilities, campaign signs, campaign buttons, forums and debates on port property, endorsements, and more. Read more in this month's [Knowing the Waters](#).

Grants and Resources for Ports

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% match is required.
- The pre-application was due June 5, 2025.
- The full application is due July 17, 2025.

Commerce Public Works Board Fiscal Year 2026 – applications due August 8, 2025

Funding for construction, preconstruction, and emergency projects to maintain public infrastructure systems is available through the Department of Commerce. For construction, there is approximately \$100 million available; for preconstruction, there is approximately \$7.5 million; for emergency, there is also approximately \$7.5 million, and there is not a deadline for emergency funding so long as funds are still available. Learn more [here](#).

Ecology EV Charging Level Grants opening soon – applications open July 8 – August 21, 2025

The Department of Ecology is using funds from the Volkswagen diesel settlement for Level 2 EV charging grants. Grants will offer \$10,000 per plug (up to 80% of project costs) for a total of \$2 million this round. Read more about how to apply [here](#).

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.

Tribal Electric Boats Program – applications due October 23, 2025

For our ports that partner with tribes, we are sharing a funding opportunity you may wish to pass along.

The Tribal Electric Boats Program (TEBP), funded by the Climate Commitment Act, is awarding \$4,750,000 to tribes to support the electrification and hybridization of marine propulsion power for tribal fishing vessels, including boats for research and patrol activities. Grants include marine charging equipment needed to power the boats.

- Federally recognized tribes, tribal enterprises, and tribal members are eligible to apply for grant funds for the purchase of or conversion to electric motors and engines for fishing vessels.
- “Fishing vessels” includes vessels for patrol, research, or other uses that ensure tribal fishing rights and activities. Projects must include the “purchase of or conversion to electric motors and engines,” including charging infrastructure.
- Pre-application conference is July 16.

For Request for Application documents and additional details including eligibility, allowable costs, and timeline, see the [TEBP webpage](#). Tribes with questions can contact Caitlin Roberts at 564-250-1887.

Washington State Treasurer’s LOCAL Program

The LOCAL program, offered through the Office of the Washington State Treasurer, provides Washington municipalities with a cost-effective way to finance equipment and/or real estate projects. Participants can take advantage of the current program rating of Moody’s Aa1, low fees and expenses, technical assistance, and access to the tax-exempt bond market.

The Port of Port Angeles is the [most recent port district to take advantage of the LOCAL Program](#).

Check out the [LOCAL Program guide](#) and visit the [Program FAQs](#) for more information.

Climate Resources at Washington Climate Action

The [Washington Climate Action](#) website is a first-stop shop for funding or other resources related to climate and natural resources, including grant writing support and contracting information.

Commerce Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) – applications accepted on rolling basis

The [Brownfields RLF](#) provides low interest loans to entities undertaking cleanup of contaminated properties to support redevelopment, promote public health and safety, improve environmental quality, and create jobs at and around brownfield sites. Average loan amounts are approximately \$500,000 and up to 50% of the loan may be forgiven for public entities. Loan terms are typically 5 years or less, and the interest rate is negotiated based on project need. A 1% loan fee is required. Learn more [here](#).

Commerce Small Business Credit Initiative – accepted on a rolling basis

Through the Washington State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI), the Washington State Department of Commerce is collaborating with Heritage Bank to offer the Owner-Occupied Commercial Real Estate Loan Program. The program allows Heritage to make loans to businesses that own the buildings in which they operate, and who wish to purchase new buildings or expand current operations. This means port tenants who are contemplating expansion but need capital could have access to low-interest loans to support their downpayment.

Heritage Bank administers the program. You can find more information [on their website](#). The bank has also worked with Commerce to [publish an informative one-pager](#).

EPA Thriving Community Grant Makers – accepted on a rolling basis

The Environmental Protection Agency opened their Thriving Community Grantmakers Program on January 15 and is 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 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.

Federal Clean Energy Tax Assistance Program – free and available now

Administered through Commerce, the [Federal Clean Energy Tax Credit Assistance Program](#) offers tax incentives to eligible entities (including ports) through the Inflation Reduction Act. Free resources, including personalized support from clean energy tax attorneys, are available [here](#).

Highlighted Events



Commissioners Seminar, July 21-23 at Semiahmoo Resort in Blaine: [Event information](#) is available, and [registration is open](#) for the WPPA Commissioner Seminar that is taking place next week at Semiahmoo resort in Blaine. The room block has expired but we may still be able to get you a room. Please email [Mandy Lill](#) for more information or if you have any questions or want to inquire about sponsorship opportunities.



WPPA Port Academy Series – Second Installment: August 14 at the Chelan Douglas Regional Port Authority (CDRPA)

Attention Port Staff: Our first academy series class was a BIG success, so we're excited to invite WPPA members to our second Port Academy Series event! This is a new educational initiative where we are offering port staff an opportunity to learn from one another through hands-on, port led forums. This is the second of three installments in 2025 and is hosted by the CDRPA on August 14th from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Registration is open, you can find information on this event [here on our website](#). If you have any questions, please reach out to [James Cockburn](#) at WPPA.



Environmental Seminar, September 25 - 26 at Alderbrook Resort, Union - COMING SOON!:

Event registration will be available July 24th, we will email an invite as soon as it is live on our website! In the meantime, if you would like to reserve your room at Alderbrook Resort, you can do so by calling 360-898-2145 and tell them you are with the **WPPA Environmental Seminar 2025**. Our special room block rate is \$270 + taxes and fees. Please email [Mandy Lill](#) if you have any questions or would like to sponsor this event! We're looking forward to seeing you in Union!

Save the Dates: WPPA 2025 Remaining Events

- 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



As Arthur Sees It

Notes from the Executive Director and his dog

Maybe it's the natural high from driving back from Leavenworth to my sun-splashed South Seattle neighborhood – the good vibes from the pine smells flooding in my car windows, the resolution to NOT take a bunch of work calls from the highway, but I am back to loving life on the road! And I am here to tell you: the best thing about Washington ports is the way they introduce you to all this state has to offer. Consider a few examples.

After a hectic end of legislative session and a busy May schedule that forced me to fly to Spokane and back, I was seriously missing out on road time. But at the end of June, we had our Finance and Administration Seminar in Walla Walla and I drove across the state to get there. First, though, there was the M-84 workshop in Kalama, where the group welcomed visitors from the Mississippi River and the Upper Mississippi Waterways Association, who then wove their way across the state in a corresponding pattern to mine. I made my way from Kalama to Pasco for an open house on the Lower Snake River

Dams Transportation Alternatives Study, then ran into our Mississippi friends at the Marcus Whitman Hotel in Walla Walla. They were still in a daze from all the scenic landscapes they'd beheld on their trip across the state. I was similarly singing the praises of my path through the Gorge along the Columbia, to the banks of the Snake. And while I missed the Key Technologies tour that took place as part of the Finance and Administration Seminar, on my drive home Friday I took part in another can't-miss Washington roadside stop: the [famous tamales at Los Hernandez](#) in Union Gap (as recommended by the roadwise ED from Port Angeles, Paul Jarkiewicz!).

Next up there was the mid-July jaunt to Chelan and Douglas counties, where Leavenworth and all its alpine glory played host to the 2025 Directors Seminar. The only challenge in the drive through the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie Natural Forest is keeping your vehicle on the road as you marvel at the steep slopes and stately pines. And the final few miles down the Wenatchee River are enough to draw any tourist, business interest, or prospector to our state. Our directors were treated to a Port tour hosted by Jim Kuntz and his able staff (special shout out to Stacie de Mestre), where we were all stunned by more than just the beautiful setting, but by a port that is truly doing it all! From airport improvements to data center development, to revitalizing a downtown core to innovating in-water infrastructure, the Chelan-Douglas Regional Port Authority demonstrates all the ways our ports build on the natural gifts of their districts to inspire prosperity in their community. And yes, this is a shameless plug for the upcoming [Port Academy Series, taking place in Wenatchee and hosted by CDRPA on August 14!](#)

Now, we head for another of Washington's marvels, with the Marina Committee due in Grays Harbor County on Tuesday, July 15. Where else can you visit a public port district that boasts the most soymeal exports from the West Coast and is in the top 10 for seafood landings nationwide. The Port of Grays Harbor will showcase all they do in a meeting that will feature four legislators from around the Puget Sound region with an interest in maritime issues, and with port districts traveling from far flung regions to marvel at the Pacific's bounty. And to wonder how much more the port can do, as [it invests in nearly doubling the export capacity of one of its marine terminals.](#)

From Westport I'll travel to the north Puget Sound and the islands, where I'll join [Northwest Maritime Center's "Navigator Night Out"](#) in Port Townsend to support a key WPPA partner (in one of our most beautiful port districts!), then to Coupeville where on July 19 we'll celebrate the [120th Anniversary of their historic wharf](#). And speaking of cool new WPPA Associate Members and partners, the wharf's milestone is also being celebrated by the [Maritime Washington National Heritage Area](#), so keep an eye on their publications page for future updates about the Port of Coupeville!

Then the wheel turns to the community of Blaine and Semiahmoo Resort. This is a first time visit for me, and I'm told you can even see Canada! And as a bonus, it's located in a port district that exemplifies the willingness our members must take on environmental contamination to turn vital waterfront sites into community spaces that hum with activity and positive experiences for the port district's residents and visitors. I'll be back in [September for their famous Sea-Feast](#). Join me if you're in the upper-left corner of the state!

We'll round out this transient July with the WPPA staff heading to the opposite corner of the state for our staff retreat in Whitman County. Pullman will play host to our annual opportunity to unwind and connect as a staff, and in this case pretend we're back in college! Pushing my car through the Palouse as the wheat waves will remind me once again of how lucky I am to spend my time with you all, in this magnificent state, marveling at all the work you do to keep Washington working and our communities thriving. See you on the road!

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