



WASHINGTON PUBLIC PORTS ASSOCIATION

THE MANIFEST

August 13, 2025



*A majestic view of the Columbia River with Mt. Hood towering in the background.
Photo courtesy of the Port of Vancouver USA.*

August Updates at WPPA

With summer in full swing, it's time for another edition of the WPPA Manifest Newsletter, and we want to start by thanking our port members for always being gracious hosts and welcoming WPPA staff into your communities. Since our last newsletter, we have been in Grant County and Whatcom County, in Grays Harbor County and all the way down to Whitman County. We've encountered nothing but the warmest of welcomes, and it makes this our favorite time of year here at WPPA.

At the end of July, we kept up our tradition of using the summer months as a chance to do an annual WPPA Staff Retreat. And a key part of that tradition is visiting a region where we have a port, and combining our retreat with a port tour, and with some good port socializing! Last year we went to a Port Angeles Lefties minor league baseball game with staff from the Port of Port Angeles; the year before, it was the Port of Bellingham team. This year, we went east and visited our friends at the Port of Whitman County. They graciously loaned us their conference facilities for our afternoon of diving deep on a few matters of Association priority, then we struck out that afternoon for Part I of our Port Tour, seeing their Boyer Park Marina and the Business Air Center.

With the work done for the first day of the retreat, we turned to another core WPPA staff retreat tradition: miniature golf! We invited the port to join us, and they came out in force, with commissioners, staff, and their families. It was a perfect evening in the Palouse, and we even awarded Commissioner Karl Weber with a one-of-a-kind WPPA-branded lunchbox for his performance and his team's win at golf. The next morning, we rounded out the visit with more exciting port sites, including the recently acquired Oksdale Mill and the future site of their Tech Transfer Facility at the Pullman Industrial Park. The work this port has underway is a testament to the value proposition that ports offer their communities—helping local businesses thrive, attracting new ones, and working across various industries to ensure a diverse local economy. The team that Kara and the commissioners have assembled is a special bunch, and we were grateful to them for making our 2025 Staff Retreat a huge success!

Speaking of special communities, WPPA rolled up its banner and headed to the opposite corner of the state the week prior, for our 2025 Commissioners Seminar at the always-awesome Semiahmoo Resort in Blaine, WA. From endless sunsets to enthralling seminar content, the setting sparked conversation, and commissioners enjoyed the chance to see old friends and reconnect. We covered an array of topics, ranging from maritime worker training and apprenticeships to the best practices for identifying and onboarding new commissioners. We welcomed our strategic communications consultants to lead a workshop on port messaging, and we had fun putting retired General Counsel Frank Chmelik to work in his new capacity: WPPA Life Member. Frank joined new WPPA General Counsel Tim Schermetzler on two panels, talking port comprehensive planning and updating attendees on the latest port election laws.

Thanks to WPPA Events guru Mandy Lill, the meals felt more like wedding receptions, with seagulls dive-bombing the cheese plate the only downside to spending every evening right on the water's edge. Many commissioners traveled hundreds of miles—through some truly shocking traffic—and we were happy to get the chance to connect. Many thanks to our friends at the Port of Bellingham for being gracious hosts and sharing your port district with us.

Now we turn our focus to the next Port Academy Series, happening this week in Wenatchee, followed by our Environmental Seminar at Alderbrook September 24-26, then back to Campbell's for Small Ports on October 23-24.

Looking forward to seeing you out and about – stay in touch!

Port Spotlight: Port of Vancouver USA, on revitalizing its waterfront



The port's newly constructed Vancouver Landing features waterfront public access spaces and infrastructure.

Vancouver, WA is a city that sits at many crossroads. It is at the border between Washington and Oregon, just on the other side of the Columbia River from Portland. I-5 cuts directly through it, headed to the north and south, and I-84 headed east and west is on the other side of the river. Vancouver's port, the Port of Vancouver USA, is the farthest-inland deepwater port on the Columbia River and it represents a confluence of ocean and river-bound shipping. The Port of Vancouver USA has always been about logistics, and today it pairs that focus with a desire to restore Vancouver's waterfront to make it a place where commerce and public recreation can thrive.

The Port of Vancouver USA was founded back in 1912, making it the 3rd-oldest public port in the state of Washington. They initially moved timber and other goods down the Columbia River, and in 1918 added shipyards to their facilities.

"When we first started we were just to the west of what's now the I-5 bridge, moving timber, prunes, and more," said Casey Bowman, Director of Communications at the Port of Vancouver USA.

That site is still there. Terminal 1 (acquired in 1925) is now being "reimagined into a commercial hotspot on the river that will have a 40,000 square-foot public market," located on the site of the former Red Lion Hotel. When the hotel chain did not renew their lease, the commissioners changed their approach to the space and reimagined it as an area that prioritized public access to the waterfront. They looked to Wenatchee's Pybus Market and other public markets in the area for inspiration and sought to reuse historic port infrastructure in creating the market.

"Right now [at the site] there is a new AC Hotel, completed in 2022, and last year saw the completion of ZoomInfo's brand new headquarters. The Public Market will be out over the river, and it will evoke the old warehouse that was originally there," said Bowman.

But the Port of Vancouver USA's focus has never shifted away from commerce, and this original focus is still a top priority. Four marine terminals and 17 shipping berths have been established downriver, with diverse capabilities to handle many of the commodities that are shipped via the Columbia, by rail and on trucks.

"We take pride in the diversity of cargo that moves through," Bowman said. "You can see the broad range of goods that move here—United Grain, Subaru, we're the number one gateway for wind energy on the West Coast, and more. Cargo diversity, that's been a strategic decision."

That varied approach and strategic thinking has been a hallmark for the Port of Vancouver USA for years. They also host a variety of industrial properties within the city limits of Vancouver, making it a major hub for manufacturing and commerce.

"It's a rarity on the west coast. Not much of this type of land is available," Bowman said.



As the farthest-inland deepwater port on the Columbia River, movement of cargo has always been and will continue to be a major focus for the port.

The port has a history of helping local businesses thrive. Sigma DG, one of the port's industrial tenants, originally started in the owner's garage. A manufacturer of fiberglass systems, they initially laid out 20- and 40- foot rods of fiberglass rebar in the owner's driveway. Industrial space from the Port of Vancouver USA allowed them to grow and move into complete fiberglass systems, and the company is now a leader in concrete forming for construction and fiberglass supports for mining.

The port continues to diversify its interests, the transformation of Terminal 1 one of the biggest examples of "adapting to a growing city," Bowman said. "While our marine and industrial activity will continue to be our biggest economic engines, we also recognize people want to recreate and enjoy their waterfront. The best ports have visions to adapt to the desires of the community. [Redevelopment like this] is not what you traditionally see ports doing, but I now see a lot of them adapting in that way."

As the Port of Vancouver USA has adapted to a changing world, they are positioned particularly well to withstand changes to the market. They're a port of security and stability that provides an economic base to their city.

"The diverse businesses and the diverse lines of cargo really make us unique," Bowman said. "With all the uncertainty in the world, it's really come into play how important that is. If one commodity is faced with difficulty, we're able to pivot. We do that as well as anybody."

Legislative Spotlight: Focus on Rulemaking: Shoreline Management Act

There is much going on this interim in preparation for the 2026 legislative session, including agency rulemaking and efforts to prepare agency reports with policy recommendations. This month's update will focus on the Shoreline Management Act rulemaking that will impact many of our Puget Sound and river ports, including a couple other efforts that may produce policy recommendations in the upcoming session.

The Washington Department of Ecology is moving forward with updates to rules relating to the [Shoreline Management Act \(SMA\)](#). These revisions will have important implications for ports, marinas, and other water-dependent uses. Ecology has noticed the rulemaking, posting draft proposals on their webpage and accepting informal public comments. If your port is impacted by the proposed changes, we highly recommend that you ***let us know your thoughts and/or take the time to submit comments to Ecology before the August 15th midnight deadline.***

Proposed amendments from Ecology are aimed at addressing climate resilience and include new requirements for local governments to account for sea level rise and increased storm severity in all Shoreline Master Programs (SMPs). This could affect ports with activities along waterfronts that may be impacted by sea level rise and have additional planning requirements.

It will also update waterbody lists and the list of streams, rivers, and lakes in completed SMPs. The rule would clarify shoreland/wetland designations and refine definitions and boundaries for shorelines of the state.

Ecology also seeks to improve process clarity by providing more detail on SMP approval/ amendment procedures, permitting, and enforcement. These changes are important for ports to understand as we rely on clear, consistent shoreline regulations to plan and maintain critical infrastructure and remain competitive in our daily operations.

WPPA and a few interested ports have convened an internal workgroup on the SMA updates and recently had a meeting with Ecology's SMA rulemaking team for a productive discussion on this topic and shared some key port priorities. This included (1) sharing the need for clear, consistent standards for sea level rise vulnerability assessments, with recognition of the unique role of port infrastructure and activities, (2) further ensuring that permit triggers, especially for "no net loss," variances, and conditional use permits, are appropriate for water-dependent and industrial uses, and (3) the importance of coordinating with ports in shoreline hazard planning rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach. Ecology answered many of our questions and welcomed feedback on these issues, encouraging written comments.

Timeline & How to Engage [TAKE ACTION!]:

1. **Now – Aug. 15, 2025:** Ecology is accepting *informal public comments* until August 15, midnight. [Comment here](#). Or contact WPPA to coordinate input with the port working group and ensure your voice is represented.
2. **Ongoing:** Ecology will continue stakeholder outreach and technical engagement before drafting the formal rule text.
3. **Spring 2026:** Propose rule, formal rulemaking and public comment period.
4. **Fall 2026:** Adopt rules and rules become effective.

Ports bring vital technical expertise to shoreline management, and our early engagement will help shape rules that balance environmental stewardship, climate resilience, and economic vitality. Thank you to all those who have participated thus far and continue to provide feedback!

Other public comment opportunities:

The Interagency [Clean Energy Siting Coordinating Council](#) is seeking feedback on ideas for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of clean energy siting and permitting in Washington. The Council prepared [draft recommendation ideas](#) for review and input for its annual report to the governor and state Legislature. Comments can be submitted using an [online form](#) through **11:59 p.m. on August 15, 2025**. WPPA will be submitting comments and recommend that others with specific permitting and siting concerns also submit comments.

The [Washington Climate Partnership \(WCP\)](#) has been collecting input on a new Washington state Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) this past year. The draft version of the CCAP describes actions Washington can take within each sector to meet the state's long-term climate goals, ultimately to be used by policymakers. CCAP public engagement is NOW open until **August 22, 2025**. Visit the [website](#) to see the draft CCAP and ways to share comments. WPPA is a member of the advisory committee and has been providing feedback, but it is important to still provide comments on this final proposal as the recommendations are intended for agency staff and legislative consideration.

Knowing the Waters

In the August edition of Knowing the Waters, Tim Schermetzler of CSD Attorneys at Law dives into the Washington Voting Rights Act (WVRA), a topic he discussed during his presentation at the Commissioner's Seminar in July. The WVRA's aim, to strengthen protections for minority voters, will impact the ways that ports run their commission elections. Schermetzler covers the ways that ports can change their election systems, either through voluntary change or in response to a court order. Learn more in this month's [Knowing the Waters](#).

WPPA Education Foundation Auction – Coming This November!

We're thrilled to announce that this year's WPPA Annual Meeting in Tacoma will feature a live and silent auction to benefit the WPPA Educational Foundation, and we invite you to get involved!

The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that funds two annual scholarships:

- The Winter Scholarship supports continuing education for port employees.
- The Spring Scholarship supports students with family ties to Washington ports pursuing port-related careers.

Your auction donations help make these scholarships possible. Popular contributions include tickets, gift baskets, weekend getaways, professional services, unique experiences, and more. All donations are tax-deductible (Tax ID#: 91-2029218).

If you'd like more information, you can [read about it here on our website](#). Thank you for helping us invest in the future of Washington's ports!

Grants and Resources for Ports

USDOT Surface Transportation Proposal **Request for Ideas** by August 20

Read our blog post [here](#) on the USDOT Surface Transportation Reauthorization. A formal "Request for Ideas" has been posted in the [Federal Register](#), with comments due by **August 20, 2025**.

Ecology EV Charging Level Grants – applications due 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.

Maritime Washington National Heritage Area: Webinars on Coastal Flooding

Our friends at the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area are hosting a series of free webinars in August and September on coastal flooding. Please see agenda, registration, and more [here](#).

- Wednesday, August 20, 12-1:30 p.m. – [Assessing the Risks and Impacts](#)
- Tuesday, August 26, 1-2:30 p.m. – [Picking an Adaptation Plan](#)
- September 2, 12-1:30 p.m. – [Getting the Right Permit](#)
- Tuesday, September 9, 12-1:30 p.m. – [Assembling your Team and Doing the Work](#)

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.

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



Environmental Seminar, September 25 - 26 at Alderbrook Resort, Union

Registration is now open for the [2025 Environmental Seminar](#) at Alderbrook Resort in Union! Please note that our hotel room block has already sold out. Mandy Lill is keeping a waiting list so contact her if you would like to be added to it or if you would like recommendations for other accommodations in the area. If you already have a room but need to cancel it for any reason, please let Mandy know before you cancel it so we can transfer it to someone on the waiting list. We are also looking for sponsors for this year's event! Please check with [Mandy Lill](#) for sponsorship opportunities!

Save the Dates: WPPA 2025 Remaining Events

- Small Ports Seminar: October 23-24 at Campbell's Resort, Chelan (Registration opening soon!)
- 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



Eric's view at the Mariners stadium last weekend

Notes from the Executive Director and his dog

I know what you're thinking: "When is this guy going to write about the Seattle Mariners again!?" Or maybe you had the opposite thought: "stop trying to rip off Eric Johnson's 'Balls and Strikes' Column!"

More likely still, your first thought when you get to the end of the Manifest newsletter is "who reads this drivel anyway??" A valid question to which there is only one sure answer: Ben Hoppe at J.U.B. Engineers.

For Ben or anyone else who is still here, I do think it's time that we talked about the Seattle Mariners. More specifically, there is one Mariner in particular who bears discussion at this moment: Ichiro Suzuki.

I was lucky to go down to the ballpark on August 9th and sit with my brother and a dear friend in tantalizingly good seats, close enough that you can smell the grass and hear the players razzing each other in the dugout. On this particular day, it was also close enough to see a parade of Mariners legends climb the dugout steps and sit in a semi-circle on the infield, waiting for the arrival of the greatest hitter of all time.

For me, it was like watching a sepia-tinted slideshow of childhood: from watching the Big Unit on my little TV in my dad's shop at our Portland house and being vaguely afraid of him; to taking the train up with my little league team to watch the '95 Mariners and idolizing Junior, along with the rest of the world; to the 2001 season, Ichiro's arrival, 116 games, taking the ferry over and walking to the park with my dad so many times that year that we felt like we were on the team.

The stadium on Saturday heaved with emotion and memory, mine and 40,000 others, kids and adults bouncing on the balls of their feet, craning their necks to catch a glimpse of the Mariners Hall of Famers as they arrived one-by-one. Even the current players standing on the top step of the dugout looked just as much like fans as the rest of us. And then with a burst of fireworks and a surge of music, the center field wall opened and Ichiro appeared. Diminutive as ever, but powerful in his presence, he walked slowly toward home plate as the crowd roared.

His speech was simple and to the point: he thanked his former teammates and coaches and executives, and he thanked the fans. But then he turned to the players hanging off the dugout fence and turned the heat up on them. He urged them to embrace the pressure that comes with the moment, and to not take success for granted. I watched them all, as they looked back at this little legend, and thought to myself "well if they didn't feel the pressure before, they sure do now!"

It was a thrilling experience from beginning to end, and this climactic call out of the current squad was a cinematic moment: a beautiful northwest day, a full stadium, a parade of legends, a peerless talent, and a team on the brink. Now the next two months will serve as the denouement, with either a grand finale of playoff progress, or an unraveling and another heartbreak. Whatever happens, this moment on that Saturday night, will live long in the memory of me and countless Mariners fans.

And for those of you who are wondering what this has to do with Ports? It doesn't! Some things are just about the Mariners, and about Ichiro, and about this team's long slow march toward history.

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