



October 21, 2025



A port welcome sign as seen from a marina slip – photos courtesy of the Port of Kingston

October Updates from WPPA

Leaves are turning, rain is falling, it's autumn at the Ports Association and we will be seeing a lot of you this month!

With our seminar program progressing and nearly completed for the year, our staff will pack its projectors and name tags and head for Campbell's Resort in Chelan, the site of our Small Ports Seminar for the third year running. Gathering with our smaller members on the banks of Lake Chelan has become a nice fall tradition, and this year we are excited to once again hear from some of our ports, who will not just attend but also speak on various panels. From tourism and local placemaking, to the use of the industrial development district statute, we have a few agenda items where our members are best suited to be the educators. We are also happy to be joined by some notable outside experts, including the Center for Creative Land Recycling who will help present our Thursday morning intensive on "Brownfields 101," as well as Impact Washington and representatives from the Washington State Auditor's Office. Thanks to everyone who has registered for what we hope will be another great seminar.

On the theme of “ports learning from ports,” we are also approaching our third and final Port Academy Series event of the year, this time hosted by our friends at the Port of Port Angeles. With strong examples from the kickoff seminar at the Port of Kalama and the second installment at the Chelan-Douglas Regional Port Authority, the team at the Port of PA is preparing a robust program for the group that makes its way to the Olympia Peninsula on October 29th. Anyone venturing out that way should plan to join the optional welcome gathering on the evening of the 28th—and if you haven’t already registered, [there is still space!](#)

This will be the final stretch on seminar prep, with the team turning its focus to the Annual Meeting, held this year *In November!* That’s right, the early installment means those of you attending Small Ports and the Annual Meeting will have a quicker turnaround, and it means the same for us here as we crash on final materials. From getting panels prepped to getting the speakers confirmed (we now expect to have Governor Ferguson provide a keynote, pending final confirmation...) it will be a sprint to November. The good news is, it affords us more time to turn our December attention to the approach of the 2026 Legislative Session, which is sure to be a busy one (read more in Eric’s *As Arthur Sees It* column).

And since our last Manifest Newsletter, we’ve successfully executed another packed and informative Environmental Seminar, held at the end of September at Alderbrook Resort in Union, WA. We’ve had Carly down at a Regional Energy Symposium in Oregon, and James *also* in Oregon for the Pacific Coast Congress of Harbormasters. Mandy, Carly, and Eric crashed PNWA’s party for their Annual Convention in Vancouver, and Eric is supporting The Northwest Seaport Alliance’s 10-year anniversary breakfast as the emcee. And somewhere in there, Tasha and Eric worked with WPPA Treasurer Jim Rothlin to develop a draft budget, which the Executive Committee will be reviewing, amending, and proposing to all of you in November.

Stay in touch, send us questions on the information below, feedback on seminars, and ideas for future work together. And we will look forward to seeing you in Chelan and beyond!

Port Spotlight: The Port of Kingston on Connecting Recreation and Economy



Aerial view of the Port of Kingston's marina and Washington State Ferry terminal

If you visit the Olympic Peninsula, there’s a good chance you have traveled through the Port of Kingston. Kingston sits just across the Puget Sound from Edmonds and northwest of Seattle on the Kitsap Peninsula. Kingston’s location makes it the perfect place for the Washington State Ferry terminal that links Kingston to Edmonds as well as the Kitsap Fast Ferry which links Kingston to downtown Seattle for daily commuters and tourists.

Kingston is a vibrant community that invests in recreation and public access to the water. This historic port has long placed leisure hand-in-hand with economic development and worked for years to make it a great place to live and work as well as a critical hub for transportation in the Puget Sound.

The area where Kingston now sits was settled in the 1880s with the intent of forming a resort community but quickly grew with the timber industry. Appletree Cove was a perfect place to ship lumber to the Seattle area,



and the dock at Kingston became an important stop for the Puget Sound Mosquito Fleet, commercially operated passenger ferries that transported people and goods around Puget Sound.

In 1919, Kingston residents voted to create the Port of Kingston and the port immediately got to work, purchasing and improving the dock to increase its capacity for both passenger and cargo ships. Soon after, car ferries began to provide service from Edmonds and Ballard. The port was prudent in supporting this development—when Washington State Ferries took over operation of the dock, Kingston had already been running car ferries for nearly 30 years.

The Port of Kingston from another angle... and another time

In 1967 the port opened a 274-slip marina to the public. In the years since, the port has improved these facilities, increasing capacity to 311 total slips and including space for kayaks and other small boats. Improvements have also included covered moorage, power hookups and pump-outs for boats, and in March of this year the port installed new dock sections built by the Port of Friday Harbor to replace aging sections and improve ease of use for marina users.

The Port of Kingston makes extensive use of their facilities to this day, with community events hosted nearly all year. From May to October the port hosts a Public Market weekly on Sundays and a Sunset Market on the first Saturday of each month. In July and August, the port hosts Concerts on the Cove, which runs from the 4th Saturday of July and every Saturday through August. In September the port partners with Greater Kingston Kiwanis for the Kingston Coho Derby, a fishing competition that coincides with the annual salmon run, and throughout December the port hosts Christmas in the Cove. For this holiday celebration, the port and marina tenants deck the slips at the marina, hanging lights and decorations around the facilities and on the boats docked there.

Kingston is a community with a long history as a gateway between the Kitsap Peninsula, coastal Washington and the greater Seattle area. The Port of Kingston has worked to make that gateway a destination in and of itself, recognizing that with public leisure opportunities come economic development. The port keeps busy with public events while improving their facilities, creating a space that is exciting and accessible for everyone, people passing through and community members alike.



A bedecked pavilion at the Port of Kingston marina during Christmas at the

Legislative Spotlight: Washington State Trade Strategy

In February 2023, a group of port leaders were invited into the Governor's Conference Room for a meeting with three cabinet officials and senior staff. The topic of the meeting was simple: how do we keep our ports competitive? The Administration was wondering what public policies could be advanced that would improve the competitiveness of our gateways, keep costs down for shippers, keep WA goods moving to international markets, and grow jobs in trade-related sectors.

Since then, WPPA has been advancing certain elements of that conversation, as have our partners. From our Supply Chain Competitiveness Improvement Program (SCCIP) effort, to various legal appeals of expanded stormwater permits, the policies discussed that day have remained in front of the Legislature and the state agencies we work with. But our efforts have not advanced, and we have seen our partners also struggle to get buy-in from policymakers and regulators. Growers in Washington have seen increased supply chain congestion challenge their path to export markets, and the current tariff regime has increased costs to importers and manufacturers. With all of these factors at play, this spring WPPA joined with the Washington Trucking Association and a group of other supply chain supporters to convene a conversation around developing a **Washington State Trade Strategy**.

This group has oriented itself around a central vision: "to make Washington state the most competitive gateway on the West Coast for international trade." That means the jobs at ports and on the supply chain that keeps goods moving—but also the spinoff benefit of animating our manufacturing sector, keeping Washington-built and grown goods competitive even for domestic markets. We identified a central problem statement as a group, keeping consensus among disparate interests:

Our state has long benefited from an economy that is touted as "the most trade-dependent" in the nation. That is changing, with container volumes decreasing, farms consolidating and going out of business, and a range of international factors impacting our competitiveness. It is in the best interests of Washington state to promote the competitiveness of our state as a trade gateway, generating jobs and economic activity for the benefit of all Washingtonians.

We also confirmed the values with which we approach this work, from quality jobs to affordability, from promoting a safe working environment, to celebrating the industries that built our state.

All along, we have prioritized consensus and shared priorities: we have business and labor at the table, rail and trucking. We have the shipping companies represented through the Pacific Merchant Shipping Association and the barge companies represented through the American Waterways Operators. And looking ahead toward the 2026 Legislative Session, we are preparing to put forward a modest policy package that we think we can all agree on.

Pending final feedback from a range of our partners, we are looking at a few specific proposals, including the following:

Tax policy to support trade-related sectors:

- Incentives for new and expanded warehousing and manufacturing space, building on a proposal that has enjoyed bipartisan support in prior legislative sessions.
- Tax relief for a new designation of entities: "trade-exposed small businesses."

Supply chain investment:

- A renewed look at our proposal for targeted investment in supply chain facilities that can speed the movement of freight.
- Truck parking investments to keep pace with expanded demand on road systems from a healthy trade economy.

Do no harm:

- No new taxes on the movement of cargo, such as those proposed in the 2025 Legislative Session.
- Modest reforms to permitting that can reduce costs and provide certainty for trade-related sectors.

We know these will be difficult to advance—the Legislature could arrive in Olympia in January with a \$2 to \$4 to \$6 billion budget hole, depending on who you ask. That means any policy proposal with a price tag will be immensely challenging.

In addition, we have raised concerns about the competitiveness of our ports and our trade-related sectors before, not always with positive outcomes. So, what makes this time different? That's where consensus comes in! If we can keep this group together, we can have manufacturers in Eastern Washington weighing in on stevedoring tax proposals. We can have river ports supporting truck parking, and apple growers supporting river dredging. With a package of proposals, no one will advocate alone; they will always have a partner.

That's a simple strategy, and it relies on an even simpler concept: that Washington should remain a trade-reliant economy, to the benefit of all Washingtonians.

Knowing the Waters

In October's Knowing the Waters, Tim Schermetzler of CSD Attorneys at Law explores a topic that has captivated human curiosity for years and recently entered the mainstream experience: generative AI. Whether you're on a first-name basis with your favorite AI, or doing your best to ignore their unsettling existence, they seem to be here to stay; and that comes with implications for public records requests. Read more in this month's [Knowing the Waters](#).

Looking to Hire? Don't Forget Our Employment Page!

Did you know WPPA offers a dedicated space on our website for members to post job openings? Whether you're hiring for entry-level roles or executive positions, this page is a great way to get the word out across the port community. It's easy to use and helps connect you with candidates who understand the unique nature of port work.

To have your job listed, just email the details to Mandy Lill at mlill@washingtonports.org. Check out the page or browse current listings by [clicking HERE](#).

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 sporting event 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, [visit our website](#), or contact [Mandy Lill](#). Thank you for helping us invest in the future of Washington's ports!

Grants and Resources for Ports

Funding Opportunity Spotlight: CERB's New Rural Ports Program

Last week, we emailed Janea Stark, Executive Director, Washington State Community Economic Revitalization Board ([CERB](#)), a series of questions on the new Rural Ports Program. Read on for her answers!

What is the Rural Ports Program?

In 2025, the Legislature provided funding for a new CERB grant program to help rural ports repair, improve, and develop essential infrastructure that supports local economies. The goal of the program is simple: strengthen rural communities by enabling business growth, job creation, and improved quality of life.

Who can apply?

Any Washington port district or tribal port facility located in a [rural or frontier area](#) is eligible. Each jurisdiction may submit one application per funding round.

What kinds of projects are eligible?

The program funds publicly owned infrastructure such as port facilities, roads, bridges, water and sewer systems, and broadband extensions. Projects must clearly support economic development, private-sector investment, or community vitality. Routine maintenance and operational expenses are not eligible.

How much funding is available?

Grants are awarded in three tiers:

- Tier 1 (Frontier Counties): Up to \$1 million with a 10% local match
- Tier 2 (Rural Counties): Up to \$750,000 with a 20% match
- Tier 3 (Match Projects): Up to \$250,000 with an 80% match

What does "ready to proceed" mean?

Projects must be able to complete permitting, finalize budgets, and secure matching funds within six months of award. Construction must begin within six months of contract execution and be completed within four years.

How will CERB measure success?

CERB will track outcomes such as job creation, private investment, and community impact. Funded projects are required to report quarterly during construction and provide updates for five years after completion.

When can ports apply?

Applications and program resources are now available on the [CERB Rural Ports Program webpage](#).

If you have a potential project, please contact Janea Stark at janea.stark@commerce.wa.gov to discuss your project.

Comprehensive Climate Action Plans (CCAP) Webinar – October 27

The Washington Climate Partnership and Puget Sound Clean Air Agency invite you to a **Climate Action Planning Webinar, held Monday, Oct. 27, at 2 p.m., via Zoom**. Register [here](#). Learn more at Washington state's [Draft CCAP materials \(Box\)](#). Read the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency Draft Climate Plan [here](#).

Ecology Workshop on Shoreline Management Act Rulemaking – November 3

The Washington State Department of Ecology is seeking to [amend rules](#) that implement the Shoreline Management Act (SMA): Chapters [173-18](#), [173-20](#), [173-22](#), [173-26](#), and [173-27](#) WAC. A local government sea level rise rules **workshop focused on draft rule sections will be held on November 3, 1-3 p.m., via Zoom**. Register [here](#) for the workshop. Visit Ecology's climate resilience and shoreline management [webpage](#) to learn more.

Commerce Clean Energy Projects – applications due November 4

The Washington Department of Commerce will make **approximately \$32 million in funding for projects that modernize the electric grid, enhance community resilience, and promote solar energy deployment**. Projects can include planning and predevelopment or construction projects, and awards will range from \$50,000 to \$2.5 million. Projects will be given priority if they demonstrate readiness to begin construction immediately and complete by June 2027. [Learn more and apply here](#) by November 4, 2025. View the Request for Applications [materials here](#).

Commerce Clean Energy Tax Credit Assistance Program – Nov. office hours

Commerce provides **technical assistance in accessing federal tax credits for clean energy projects**, including solar, battery storage, wind energy, geothermal systems, electric vehicles (EVs), and EV charging infrastructure through the [Clean Energy Tax Credit Assistance Program \(CETCAP\)](#). Office hours held this month will provide an update on the current state of play for clean energy tax credits. Register here for [second Wednesday](#) (November 12, noon) or [third Friday](#) (November 21, 9:30 a.m.) office hours.

WA Electric Vehicle Charging Program – applications due December 18

Commerce will provide up to **\$19.4 million in funding through the WA Electric Vehicle Charging Program (WAEVCP)** Round 2. WAEVCP helps fund infrastructure that supports Level 2 chargers and direct-current fast chargers for public use. [Learn more and apply here](#) by December 18, 2025.

Ecology Rails, Keels, and Wheels Grants – applications due January 8, 2026

As part of the Washington State Volkswagen Federal Settlement Grant Program, Ecology will provide up to **\$25 million in grant funds to replace or convert diesel trucks, freight switchers, tugboats, and many other vehicles to all-electric**. View the [program guidelines here](#). Learn [more and apply here](#) by January 8, 2025.

EPA Brownfield MAC Grants – Opening Soon!

EPA's Brownfield [Multipurpose, Assessment, and Cleanup \(MAC\) Grants](#) solicitation opens soon! Could you use up to \$4 million for brownfield projects in your community? EPA expects to open solicitations for three grant types this fall: FY 2026 Multipurpose Grants, FY 2026 Assessment Grants, and FY 2026 Cleanup Grants.

New Guides from EPA's Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization:

- 2025 Brownfield Federal Program Guide [PDF](#)
- Navigating Funding for Brownfields Revitalization ([web text](#) and [PDF](#))
- EPA Brownfields Assessment Grants [Fact Sheet](#)
- EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant [Fact Sheet](#)

The Community Builders Collective: A Statewide Network for Project Leaders

Launching this fall, the Community Builders Collective (CBC) is a free, statewide peer network from the Washington State Community Economic Revitalization Board ([CERB](#)) for the people behind community and economic development infrastructure projects in rural, tribal, and historically under-resourced communities.

CBC members get:

- **A statewide network of peers** facing similar challenges and opportunities
- **Practical resources and tools** to support project development
- **Live training and learning opportunities** focused on real-time needs
- **24/7 access to the community** (plus CERB staff when needed)

If you're navigating complex infrastructure projects with limited time and staff, the CBC is here to help you get it done, together.

For more information sign up [here](#).

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 [recently took 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.

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.

The Federal Funds Grant Writing Assistance Program

The [Federal Funds Grant Writing Assistance Program](#) is designed for tribes, community-based organizations, local government agencies, and other entities to help prepare and submit federal grant applications. This resource is available now and can include services such as grant application planning, writing, and review and guidance for managing federal awards.

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

WPPA Port Academy Series – Third Edition: October 29 at the Port of Port Angeles



Attention Port Staff: Registration is still open for our third and final academy series event of 2025. 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. The third edition will be hosted by the Port of Port Angeles on October 29th from 9:00 am – 3:00 pm. Registration closes October 24th, you can find information for this event [here](#) on our website. If you have any questions, please reach out to [James Cockburn](#) at WPPA.



WPPA Annual Meeting, November 19 - 21, Marriott Tacoma Downtown

Registration for our [2025 Annual Meeting](#) is open! This year's event takes place at the Marriott Tacoma Downtown, November 19 - 21. Registration is also open for the CLE Seminar on November 19. Find the [agenda](#) and other key [details here](#), including the [FAQ's](#). Please email [Mandy Lill](#) with any questions and for sponsorship opportunities.

New Commissioners Seminar, November 18-19, Marriott Tacoma Downtown

Registration for the 2025 [New Commissioner Seminar](#) is also open! The bi-annual New Commissioner Seminar is held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting. You can find [agenda information](#) as well as register for the event [here on our website](#). This educational product is for newly elected commissioners as well as port staff and executives who are trying to get up to speed on all things Washington ports. We hope you will join us in Tacoma for this year's event!



Eric and Artie, cruising the state, discussing the inner workings of the Executive Committee.

As Arthur Sees It

Notes from the Executive Director and his dog

Speaking last week at the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association Annual Convention, I had the unfortunate responsibility of raising a specter which we'll all confront soon enough: another state budget with a gaping hole, a lot of red ink, a "gap," a "delta," or whatever you want to call it. Lined up on the dais with the head of the Oregon Public Ports Association and an executive agency staffer from Idaho, we each outlined some truly scary numbers: [a half billion dollar drop in anticipated revenue](#) in the Washington State revenue forecast; Oregon's budget being \$300 plus million in the hole compared to where they were when their [long session adjourned in June](#); and even Idaho, smaller and led by a legislature with conservative majorities, ending the [fiscal year with a \\$56m budget deficit](#).

This conversation and review of the state budget picture, a necessary part of our preparation for the 2026 Legislative Session, comes concurrently with our own WPPA budget development, with our own draft budget currently proposed for only a .5 percent increase. Not because we don't have lots of needs and plans, and worthwhile priorities we need to invest in, but because we focus on keeping our dues affordable for our member ports. In a world where it seems that the only thing everyone can agree on is the increase in the cost of everything, how much more inflation in costs can we all abide?

What is the connection, then, between our budget picture and the state's budget picture? I offer you one humble example: starting October 1st, a slate of new "surcharges" on the state's business and occupation tax and sales tax increases on a range of services took effect. That includes a new sales tax on the cost of attending "live presentations," which we and [other trade associations in Olympia interpret as including our conferences!](#) That means, when you register for the Annual Meeting in Tacoma, your registration fee will now come with a 9 percent sales tax included. We do not intend to pass this on to the members at this time, primarily because we were not anticipating this at the time we posted the price of registration. But that will mean we earn less in revenue from this conference, and that has a direct impact on our budget going into next year. So here we see the connection: the state raising money to fill its budget hole, and what that means for our own budget picture at WPPA.

One question I pondered as I sat in my Vancouver hotel room, was whether the state will once again seek new revenue to balance its budget, as rumors abound about a \$4b, \$6b, or \$8b gap needing to be filled as we approach the 2026 supplemental budget year. That's a lot of cutting, if they choose not to raise revenue, as a few senior budget writers have told me. It's an election year; do the Majority Democrats really want to pass another new slate of tax increases as they hit the campaign trail? Or will they suffer a bigger political cost if they are seen as *not* backfilling [federal cuts to Medicaid and other health insurance costs the federal government shares with the state](#)?

In spite of its clear connection to my job description, I hesitate to make any guesses at what the Legislature will do. But those of us who spend our time reading and wondering at the future of Olympia policymaking have now taken to discussing a common question: what *can we agree on*? With division the defining theme of our current politics, there must be at least one item on which all sides can agree—and the developing consensus is that “affordability” will be the focus of all sides entering the 2026 session. I was struck by this as I read a recent article in the national magazine Politico, which [discussed affordability in the context of climate policy](#).

We hear concerns growing with not just the available supply of energy, but also the cost to consumers—as we heard from a panel that included Northwest River Partners and The Energy Project at our 2024 Annual Meeting. Will the Legislature amend Washington's historic climate legislation with an eye toward consumer affordability? And will other policy advancements of recent sessions be re-assessed through the affordability lens?

And thinking back on that big budget hole, will affordability be the defining theme of the 2026 session as the Legislature tightens its belt? Or will there be new revenue raised to close the gap? These are the questions that will inform the next two months of discussions between policymakers and lobbyists, voters and candidates, and will be finally sorted out in the marbled halls during the 2026 session.

Washington Public Ports Association | 360.943.0760 | www.washingtonports.org