



WASHINGTON PUBLIC PORTS ASSOCIATION

2026 Legislative Priority Setting

Approved by the Board of Trustees November 21, 2025

Aviation

WPPA will continue to support legislation and important infrastructure programs critical to maintaining airport investments. Airports support commercial air service, air medical transport, wildland firefighting, business and general aviation, providing economic benefits to communities across the state.

Community Aviation Revitalization Board (CARB) Funding: CARB provides low-interest loan funding for infrastructure at small General Aviation (GA) airports. WPPA supports the original goal of achieving \$25 million in revolving loan funding for this program.

Broadband

Washington's ports deliver reliable, affordable broadband through targeted infrastructure investments. WPPA supports policies that recognize the value of open access networks, especially in rural communities, and ensure access to state and federal funding, including for emerging needs on existing networks.

Economic Development

Economic development is central to port districts' missions. While the 2025 Legislature sustained infrastructure investments, including fully funding the Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) many technical and support programs were drastically cut or eliminated. WPPA will work with partners to restore and prioritize funding for programs that advance port-driven economic growth, like CERB. Including elements of our WA State Trade Strategy that focus on business recruitment and retention, such as manufacturing and warehousing tax incentives and tax relief for trade-exposed small businesses.

Tax increment financing (TIF): TIF remains an effective tool for regional economic development. WPPA will continue to engage with the Legislature about the way in which this tool is being implemented by member ports and other local governments. WPPA will work with its TIF Work Group to evaluate any proposed changes to the TIF statute and pursue a consensus Association position.

Energy

Washington's ports are at the forefront of the clean energy transition by advancing decarbonization projects, green technologies, and job growth across key industries. However, limited access to reliable, adequate, and affordable energy coupled with project delays and increased costs hinder progress. Ports investing in things like alternative fuels and zero-carbon infrastructure like shore power, are facing major barriers that slow down adoption and impact recruitment and development. WPPA advocates for policies that improve energy siting and permitting, address rising project costs, and expand in-state transmission and generation capacity. We prioritize addressing Washington's energy supply challenges to ensure the state's energy goals are pursued in a responsible and attainable way.

Port Electrification Grant Program: This program was established with \$26.5 million in the 2023–25 budget and was awarded to 11 port projects. However, WPPA had to rigorously defend funding for these projects to be reappropriated in the 2025–27 budget and was unable to secure new funding. WPPA advocates for program renewal to advance access for decarbonization projects across the state.

Environment & Natural Resources

Washington's ports are not only economic drivers in their communities but leaders in environmental stewardship and redevelopment. Managing the intersection of land, water, and commerce, ports are uniquely positioned to lead long-term cleanup and restoration efforts that strengthen both communities and ecosystems. WPPA supports initiatives that build on historic cleanup successes and advance resiliency projects for local economic vitality and environmental responsibility.

Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) funding: As MTCA demand grows and revenues decline, maintaining funding for major port cleanup projects is critical. WPPA supports preserving all three MTCA accounts for their intended purpose, especially the MTCA Capital Account, that supports port capital cleanup projects. WPPA will collaborate with stakeholders and advocate to keep Hazardous Substance Tax (HST) revenue within the MTCA accounts where it can fund things like Remedial Action Grants and Integrated Planning Grants vital to complex environmental cleanups.

Governance

WPPA supports policies that preserve transparency, accountability, and effective local decision-making for Washington's public ports. We will continue to promote and support balanced reforms to the Public Records Act, election processes, and preserve taxing authority included in port statute to ensure that ports can continue their role as economic development leaders that provide support to their communities.

Labor Relations and Workforce Development

WPPA supports policies that foster productive management-labor relations and help build a skilled, diverse maritime and port-related workforce. We work to advance investments in workforce development programs, apprenticeship and training opportunities, and collaborative efforts between industry, labor, and education partners. These efforts include initiatives that support the responsible adoption of technologies such as artificial intelligence to meet the evolving needs of Washington's economy.

Land Use and Management

Washington ports prioritize strategic land use and management to support economic development, transportation, and environmental stewardship. Ports own and operate shipping terminals, marinas and docks, airports, industrial sites, business districts, railroads, public parks and recreational facilities. Through strong partnerships and collaborative efforts, these sites and locations can be utilized and maintained to best serve their community's needs.

Growth Management Act: WPPA and several ports have participated in a Commerce-led task force evaluation on integrating special purpose district planning with county and city comprehensive plans. As recommendations advance that may be considered for the 2026 legislative session, WPPA will support policies that respect port districts' existing planning mandate while considering opportunities for greater collaboration with local government partners.

Recreation and Tourism

WPPA advocates for legislative proposals that support our mission to operate waterfront and off-water public access infrastructure, strengthen programs such as Washington's Derelict Vessel Removal Program that protect and preserve public waterways, generally expand public access to public resources consistent with our public port mission, and promote tourism in port communities.

Revenue and Taxes

WPPA traditionally limits its tax policy advocacy to proposals directly affecting port district operations or governance. In 2025 proposals to generate revenue came forward, such as a five-fold increase in the business and occupation tax assessed on stevedoring services – which prompted WPPA and supply-chain partners to take defensive positions on harmful tax bills. Anticipating revenue proposals in 2026, WPPA will continue working with the same supply-chain coalition to support tax policies that promote competitiveness of Washington's trade gateways and keep costs affordable for businesses and residents.

Cost control is key to competitiveness: WPPA understands the budget challenges and supports a balanced approach with the goal of affordability for businesses and consumers. Controlling costs in Washington's economy is key to keeping our state competitive. WPPA will advocate for a stable and competitive tax structure and oppose any additional "unfunded mandates" or proposals that unduly shift the tax burden to local jurisdictions.

Transportation

In 2025, the Legislature approved over \$4 billion in new transportation revenue over the next six years, including a .06 cent per gallon state gas tax increase and higher fees and licensing/registration costs. Despite this significant new revenue, most is necessary just to offset rising project costs and increases for maintenance and preservation leaving very few new projects or programs with available funding. Many important construction projects remain either underfunded or completely unfunded. WPPA will review transportation proposals to balance infrastructure investment with budget constraints, and the need to advance key planning projects like the Revive 1-5.

WA Trade Strategy

WPPA will continue to convene trade and supply chain stakeholders to advance a "WA Trade Strategy," comprised of priorities that boost trade competitiveness and affordability, support job growth, and increase supply chain efficiency. WPPA supports the near-term Strategy's 2026 initiatives that include tax incentives for warehousing and manufacturing, relief for small businesses and agriculture aggregators harmed by trade upheaval, capital investments in supply chain infrastructure, and "do no harm" proposals relating to regulatory reform, no new cargo movement taxes, and no net loss of industrial lands. This policy partnership envisions a longer-term effort to advance consensus priorities over the next five to seven years that WPPA will help lead.

Lower Columbia River Federal Navigation Channel: The Columbia Snake River System moves more than \$31 billion worth of cargo each year with over 40,000 local jobs relying on this system. The Ports of Longview, Kalama, Woodland, Vancouver, and Portland are working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to develop a 20-year plan to maintain channel depth. The total estimated cost for maintenance under this 20-year plan is \$170 million equally split – \$85 million for Washington. WPPA supports a state investment in the current biennium and continued support to aid in the maintenance of this critical trade gateway.