

Washington Public Ports Association

Report on the 2026 Legislative Session

Eron Berg, Executive Director, Port of Port Townsend
WPPA Government Relations Team

WPPA Spring Meeting
May 20, 2026



Welcome to our new **Legislative Committee Co-Chair**



Eron Berg
*Executive Director -
Port of Port Townsend*

Diahann Howard
*Executive Director -
Port of Benton*

*WPPA will kick off the 2027
Legislative Committee work in June!*





WPPA Government Relations Team

Eric ffitch- Governance, as interests prevail

Carly Michiels- Energy, Environment, Natural Resources, Land Use, Permitting

James Cockburn- Governance, Marinas, Labor & Workforce Development, Procurement & Public Works, Tourism & Recreation

Mandy Lill- Ports Day, Logistics, Lobbyist Meeting Support, Positive Vibes, keeping us all sane

And....





New Team Member: Martin Presley

Aviation, Broadband, Economic
Development, Procurement, Tax,
Transportation, Workforce.



Agenda

Recap: 2026 Legislative Session

Legislative Communications

WPPA 2026 Legislative Priorities

2026 Supplemental Budget

Key Issues: One from each staff member

Interim Work and Preparing for the 2027 Session

Q&A



Recap: 2026 Legislative Session

2026 Session ended on time: just SIXTY days! (Jan. 12- Mar. 12)

Follow-up to last year's historic tax package? NEW income tax on high-earners, dominated debate (including an all-nightery!)

Outside of taxes, focus on: data centers, flooding, energy supply, bonding in the transportation package, housing, and more!

Totals this biennium (2025 - 26):

1,791 House bills were introduced

1,406 Senate bills were introduced

709 bills passed both chambers

675 bills the governor took action on



Legislative Communications



Updated: March 18, 2026

Washington's 2026 Legislative Session began on Monday, January 12th, marking the second year of the two-year legislative biennium. Each biennium ends with a "short session" lasting 60 days. In short sessions, lawmakers typically make modest changes to the state's in-progress biennial budgets: Operating, Capital, and Transportation. This year, the session ended on time, with the legislature adjourning "sine die" around 8:30pm on Thursday, March 12th.

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

Between now and April 4th, the Governor will review bills passed by the legislature and choose one of four options: 1) sign the bill into law, 2) veto the entire bill, 3) partially veto the bill by removing entire sections (the Governor does not have "line-item veto" authority, meaning removing sentences or words is not allowed) or 4) take no action, and allow the bill to become law without signature.

This year, 1,205 policy bills were introduced, and 268 bills passed the legislature and have now been sent to the Governor to be signed into law. In addition, more than 1,000 bills from the 2025 session were eligible for additional consideration this year. As a reminder, during the two-year biennium, all bills that do not pass during the 105-day session, are technically alive again for the 60-day session. Many did not advance but some were revised over the interim to improve their chances of passing.

Policy Bills Introduced & Passed <i>Does not include resolutions, joint memorials, etc.</i>			
	House	Senate	Total
Introduced 2025	1086	818	1904
Introduced 2026	662	543	1205
Passed the Legislature in 2026	155	113	268

Make sure to check out our final legislative report, and the final wrap-up with a detailed funding charts!



WPPA Master Bill Tracking List Bill Status Report

Aviation

Bill #	Abbrev. Title	Short Description	Status	Sponsor	Priority	Position
HJR 1403 (Dead)	Aircraft fuel tax distrib.	Concerning the distribution of aircraft fuel tax revenue.	H	Approps.	Dent	Medium Support
HJR 1688 (Dead)	Unleaded aircraft fuel/tax	Establishing tax exemptions for unleaded aircraft fuel.	H	Finance	Dent	High Seeking Feedback
HJR 1728 (Dead)	Aircraft fuel tax proceeds	Directing the deposit of the proceeds from taxes on aircraft fuel to the aeronautics account.	H	Approps.	Orcutt	Medium Neutral
HJR 1948 (Dead) (NSB 5652)	Environment/port districts	Reducing environmental and health disparities and improving the health of Washington state residents in large port districts.	H Local Govt	Santos	High	Concerns
HJR 2322 (Dead) (NSB 2592)	Alternative jet fuel	Providing certainty for the development of low-to-zero carbon alternative jet fuel production in Washington state.	H Rules X	Dent	Medium	Support
HJR 2592 (Dead) (SB 5896)	Aircraft fuel tax proceeds	Directing the deposit of the proceeds from taxes on aircraft fuel to the aeronautics account.	H	Approps.	Ley	High Neutral
SJR 5681 (Dead) (HB 1814)	Alternative jet fuel	Advancing the production and use of alternative jet fuels in Washington.	S Ways & Means	Lias	High	Seeking Feedback
SJR 5652 (Dead) (HB 1948)	Environment/port districts	Reducing environmental and health disparities and improving the health of Washington state residents in large port districts.	S Ways & Means	Orwall	High	Concerns
SJR 5898 (Dead) (HB 2592)	Aircraft fuel tax proceeds	Reinstating Companion 2592. Directing the deposit of the proceeds from taxes on aircraft fuel to the aeronautics account. Similar to 1730.	S Ways & Means	Bochnik	High	Neutral
SJR 2322 (Dead) (NSB 2322)	Alternative jet fuel	Providing certainty for the development of low-to-zero carbon alternative jet fuel production in Washington state.	S Ways & Means	Warnick	Medium	Neutral
SJR 2592 (Dead)	Aircraft fuel tax distrib.	Concerning the distribution of aircraft fuel tax revenue.	S Ways & Means	Bochnik	Medium	Neutral
SJR 6240 (Dead)	Aviation impacts grants	Allocating a portion of hazardous substance tax revenues derived from aviation fuel to aircraft noise and air quality mitigation.	S Ways & Means	Orwall	Medium	Seeking Feedback

Broadband

Bill #	Abbrev. Title	Short Description	Status	Sponsor	Priority	Position
HJR 1441 (Dead)	Broadband/repair and replace	Authorizing repair and replace public works broadband projects.	H Cap Budget	Ryu	Medium	Support

Bill Status Report
March 9, 2026
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2026 Supplemental Budget

Total Budgeted Funds: \$157.3 billion

- **Operating budget:** \$80.2 billion (up from \$77.8 billion enacted in 2025). Commerce's work to address tariff impacts and did not sweep the derelict vessel cleanup account.
- **Transportation budget:** \$16.7 billion (up from \$15.5 billion) included investment in freight mobility and maritime infrastructure, such as funding for Lower Columbia River channel maintenance and targeted studies on supply chain efficiency. Relies on \$800 million in new bond sales.
- **Capital budget:** \$889 million funded a few additional port projects and included language to clarify concerns about possible MTCA claw backs.
- To NOTE: Revenue shifts and CCA revenue...

2026 Legislative Policy Priorities

POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

- Port pension issue resolved
- MTCA claw back
- Transportation permitting reform (lots of permitting bills)
- TIF update passed, compromise reached
- Derelict Vessel policy change
- State Transmission Authority

POLICY CHALLENGES

- Playing a lot of defense
- *Still* no supply chain/port infrastructure grant program
- Gov. request permitting bill – stalled!
- Shore power: No additional funding for Port Electrification Grant Program
- Public Records Act



Key Issue: Port Pension Bill

- Wonky but fun
- Pensions are complex
- Good faith negotiations with agency staff, bill sponsors, and labor stakeholders
- Even she supported it...



Key Issue: Ports and CETA

Senate Bill 5982 – Updating provisions for consumer-owned utilities, including port districts, and affected market customers under the clean energy transformation act.

The bill adds to CETA Chapter 19.405 RCW: *“Consumer-owned utility means... a port district formed under Title 53 RCW.”*

Highlights for ports:

1. Adds ports to the definition of consumer owned utilities. Now, ports must comply with CETA if they act as a utility. (more clearly defined port power?)
2. Changes language from more than one customer, to apply to a single customer. (single large energy users... data centers)
3. Market customer definition changed
4. Captures self-generating affected market customers



Key Issue: Ports and CETA

WHY THE HECK DID THIS COME UP??

Energy adequacy, public ports as utilities??. data centers, large energy users and economic development, Governor's Data Center Workgroup, permitting, Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA)... And more.

Senate Bill 5982 – *“Ports currently do not operate as public energy utilities.”* – Carly, not true.



SENATE BILL REPORT SB 5982

As of January 9, 2026

Title: An act relating to updating provisions for consumer-owned utilities, including port districts, and affected market customers under the clean energy transformation act.

Brief Description: Updating provisions for consumer-owned utilities, including port districts, and affected market customers under the clean energy transformation act.

Sponsors: Senators Hunt and Sherwinke.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Environment, Energy & Technology: 1/13/26.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Amends the definition of consumer-owned utility to include port districts under the Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA).
- Amends the definition of market customer under CETA to include nonresidential consumers of electricity that purchase electricity from an entity other than a utility subject to CETA, or generate electricity for their own or their lessee's consumption.
- Directs the Utilities and Transportation Commission to adopt rules to establish reporting requirements for affected market customers to demonstrate compliance with CETA and to enforce affected market customers' compliance with CETA.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY

Staff: Kimberly Culling (786-7421)

Senate Environment, Energy & Technology

01/13/26 01:55:43 PM

January 13, 2026, 1:30 pm - Senate Hearing Rm 1 and Virtual
utilities, including port districts, and affected market customers under the c



Key Issue: Ports and CETA

What is CETA??

The Washington Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA), passed in 2019, is a state law requiring electric utilities to transition to 100% clean, renewable, or non-emitting electricity by **2045**. It mandates eliminating coal-fired power by **2025** and achieving a greenhouse gas-neutral supply by **2030**, aiming to reduce emissions, ensure grid reliability, and promote equity.

And more... re: equitable transition, implementation planning, energy assistance (residential), UTC regulated reliability and affordability.



Key Issue: Ports and CETA

Senate Bill 5982 – Updating provisions for consumer-owned utilities, including port districts, and affected market customers under the clean energy transformation act.

WPPA's Ask: Commerce develop separate reporting and planning requirements specifically for ports with the authority to waive certain other requirements.

First compliance/reporting period starting in 2030 instead of July 1, 2026.



Industrial Development District (IDD) Authority: The Power Question

Provide, maintain, and operate water, light, power and fire protection facilities and services, streets, roads, bridges, highways, waterways, tracks, and rail and water transfer and terminal facilities and other harbor and industrial improvements... (Chapter 53.25.100 RCW)

Provide power?



Seattle-Tacoma International Airport

EX: Port of Seattle Aviation

In 2001, the Port of Seattle establishes IDD and operates electric utility at the airport.

Electricity is supplied by Bonneville Power Administration



Key Issue: TIF

First public hearing on HB 2451: A drama in three acts!

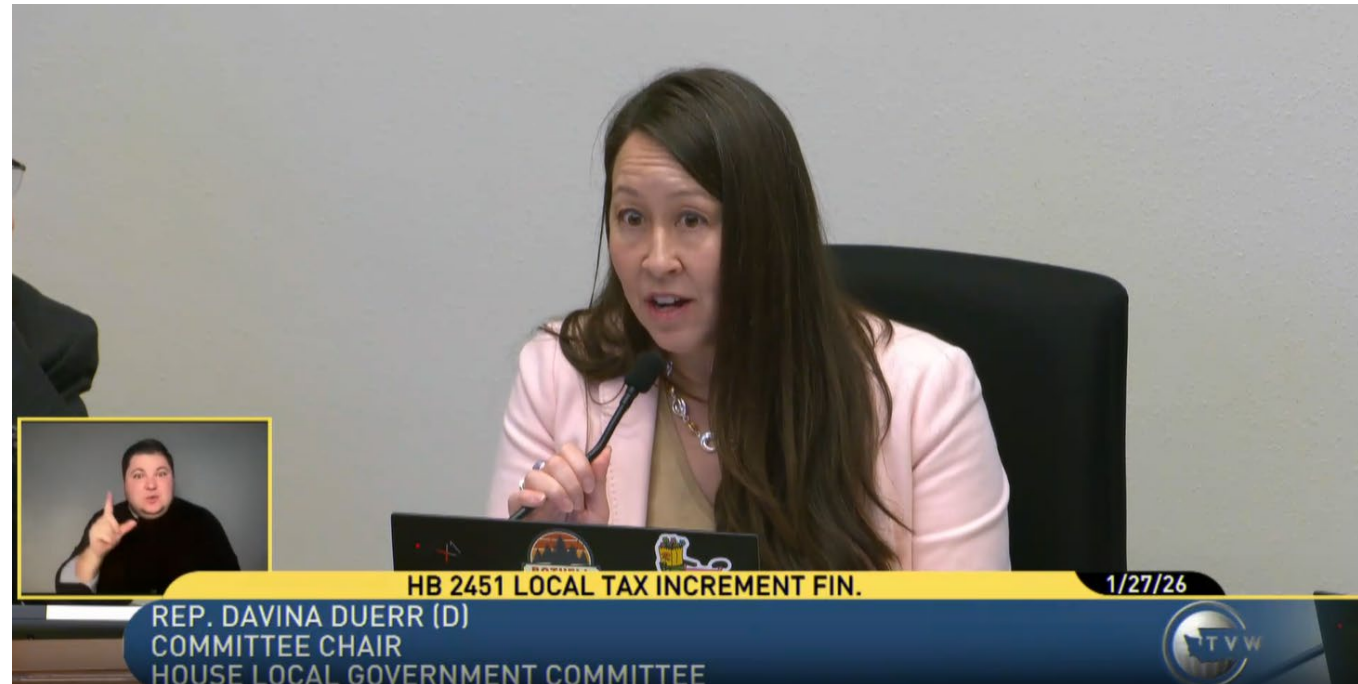
- Chair and bill sponsor, Rep. Davina Duerr, opening remarks
- Eric f., WPPA's neutral testimony
- Sean E., Port of Tacoma's supportive testimony

What did the bill actually do?

What comes next?



TIF continued – Bill sponsor opening



Chair Duerr, introducing her TIF update bill, HB 2451



TIF continued – WPPA weighs in



Eric ffitch, testifying to a “neutral” position, on behalf of WPPA



TIF continued – Phases of Sean Eagan



Sean, determined



Sean, frustrated, yet constructive



Sean, resigned, yet supportive

[Clip: Sean Eagan testifies in support of HB 2451](#)

TIF – In conclusion...

What did the bill actually do?

- Allowed for modest growth of TIA size cap, tied to inflation
- Expanded mitigation requirements for impacted taxing districts
- Tightened “but-for” test

What comes next?

- Existing TIAs not impacted
- Mitigation frameworks developed for future TIAs
- Will we see as many proposed – metric for the bill’s impact



**From the one who
makes the chaos look
easy...**



Preparing for the 2027 Legislative Session

122 seats in the Legislature are up for election this year.

Dems hold a 59-39 majority in the state House and a 30-19 advantage in the Senate.

Many retirements, many new faces, and key committee changes:
Tharinger, Shewmake, Saldana, Boehnke, Warnick, Ormsby

Five state Supreme Court justice seats are up for election



Preparing for the 2027 Session

WPPA 2027 Legislative Priorities – The Process

- WPPA Legislative Committee Meetings: first interim meeting THIS JUNE!
- WPPA Standing Committees (ie Environmental/Trade & Transportation etc.)
- WPPA Work Groups – supporting investigating and diving deeper
- Continue building on strong external partnerships

WPPA Work Groups and interim projects:

- Shore power (gov relations)
- Energy & Grid Reliability Work Group
- Stormwater Work Group – cyclical
- Shoreline Management Act – rulemaking update out in Sept.
- Industrial Development Districts – statutory changes?
- WA Trade Strategy – continue refining priorities
- Maritime Industrial Base Coalition – possible policy recommendations Q4 2026



Year-Round Advocacy – No Rest for the Weary

Interim is the time to...

- Say Thank You!
- Stay in touch: with WPPA, and with your legislative partners
- Stay visible: Invite legislators for a tour of your port, including projects.
Attend their townhalls & other events
- Participate: WPPA Legislative Committee; your local community's legislative work
- Partner: seek supporters of port priorities
- Attend future WPPA events and invite us to yours!



Questions?

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