



*Aerial view of the Port of Clarkston's Granite Lake Park.
Feature photos courtesy of the Port of Clarkston.*

August Updates from WPPA

It's August in the Washington port world, and that means more road time, legislator visits, port tours, and ribbon cuttings! With two July seminars in our rear view, the team is in the left lane speeding to all that late summer and fall has to offer. And don't worry, we are also fitting in some hard-earned vacation time along the way, in state and beyond.

With no August conferences, you might think that means that the WPPA team only see each other at World HQ in Olympia or that we all turn off our phones and hit the beach. Quite the opposite! This month kicked off with one of the great port celebrations of the year, as this year's Port of the Year, the Port of Grays Harbor, hosted a celebration and ribbon cutting of a hugely significant infrastructure project: [the Terminal 4 Expansion and Redevelopment Project](#). At what felt more like a state fair than a ribbon cutting, four members of WPPA staff joined more than 600 project supporters—from constituents and local labor leaders, to grain groups from around the country, and even some who traveled from abroad for the event. Senator Cantwell gave stirring remarks praising the port, its partners, and all they've done for the economy of the region—while longtime port champion and retiring State Capital Budget Chair Steve Tharinger spoke about the direct tie between public investment on the waterfront and opportunity in his community. Salmon was grilled, oysters were fried, a big ribbon was cut, and there was much rejoicing!

(Programming note: if you want to learn more about the good work going on at the Port of Grays Harbor, don't forget that there is still space available for our next [Port Academy Series, hosted by the Port of Grays Harbor](#) on September 17th at the port's offices in Aberdeen, WA).

Before we turn the corner to a beautiful northwest fall, there is still more to be done in August! This month, our Executive Committee continued its tradition of visiting the port of its new members, with a perfect visit to the Port of Clarkston. Commissioner Mark Brigham, our current WPPA Vice President, showed us around with the help of his capable staff. Chris Rasmussen, Executive Director at the port since mid-2022, gave us an impressive overview of their operations, and we were able to visit with two important tenants: Renaissance Marine Group, an aluminum boat builder based on Port Way just off the Snake River; and American Cruise Lines (ACL), where we were treated to a vessel tour and lunch with senior staff. Given the presence that ACL has at ports around the state, it was a good chance to learn more about their operations. And the visit to Renaissance Marine reinforced another element of our current work: the value that boat building and maritime manufacturing can bring to a community, with good paying jobs and a strong tax impact.

Read more about the Port of Clarkston in this month's Port Spotlight, featured below.

Turning to September, we hope to see many of you before the air cools and the leaves fall. As noted above, the Port Academy Series will bring port members to Aberdeen to learn more about the Port of Grays Harbor, and then our WPPA Environmental Seminar returns to Seattle for the first time in a long time. Registration is open, and the [Full Environmental Seminar agenda is available online](#). There are plenty of highlights to note, from a lunch keynote with Department of Ecology Director Casey Sixkiller, to an update on current wildfire activity delivered by Commissioner of Public Lands Dave Upthegrove. As always, our staff developed this agenda in collaboration with our membership, soliciting ideas from port and associate members alike. With case studies highlighting how ports confront environmental challenges and relevant updates on the state's regulatory environment, the programming is robust to say the least! We hope to see you in September in Seattle.

And then, of course, somehow, it's October and the Small Ports Seminar returns in Chelan, WA. We always relish the chance to see the ports who mark this early on their calendars and prioritize it among busy schedules, and who may not attend as many of our other events as they would like. Registration will be open and the agenda will be published later this week. We will welcome the State Auditor's Office as we do each year and run attendees through some concrete and tangible education items: focusing our "optional intensive" this year on project delivery and the step-by-step process that turns an idea or a nearby piece of property into a tangible port asset.

Looking forward to the next few months of productive partnership from you all, and as always please stay in touch!

Spotlight: Adapting to Meet Community and Economic Needs at the Port of Clarkston

At the southeastern edge of Washington State, where the Clearwater and Snake Rivers meet, sits Clarkston—home to Washington's easternmost public port. Since 1958, the Port of Clarkston has shaped the region's economy while creating one of inland Washington's most accessible and welcoming waterfront destinations.



Location in Washington

Today, the port manages 120 acres of commercial and industrial land along the Snake River, 35 acres of recreational land leased from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, a 40-acre industrial park, and a countywide dark-fiber broadband network that continues to expand.

Clarkston's connection to river freight began long before the port was established. Steamboats once lined the Clearwater and Snake rivers, carrying agricultural goods throughout the 20th century. The port's early mission was straightforward: strengthen and grow this river-based economy. The 14th Street dock and grain elevators built in the

1970s—still in operation today—stand as reminders of those foundational investments.

The completion of Lower Granite Dam in 1975 stabilized river conditions and opened the door to new opportunities. With more reliable water levels, the port expanded agricultural and forestry transport and began developing land for uses beyond natural-resource commerce.



An aerial view of some of the waterfront infrastructure at the Port of Clarkston. Image courtesy of the Port.

Supporting Tourism in the Columbia River System

Clarkston may be far from the ocean, but it is ideally positioned for river cruising. The first cruise ships arrived in 1984, and the port built its dedicated 7th Street cruise dock in 1989. Today, that dock anchors one of the most popular domestic cruise itineraries in the country, welcoming roughly 24,000 passengers each year.

As one of the few ports in the Columbia River system with cruise-specific facilities, Clarkston's embrace of tourism helped spark one of its proudest achievements: transforming the waterfront into a community gathering place and recreation destination.

"We have the most inviting waterfront park in the Lewis-Clark Valley," said Commission President Mark Brigham, referring to Granite Lake Park. The park features an amphitheater, a recreation dock next to a waterfront restaurant, nearby restrooms, electric charging stations for cars and e-bikes, and access to a 26 mile paved trail along the south fork of the Snake River.



River cruise ships docked at the Port of Clarkston. Image courtesy of the Port.



The Granite Lake Park sign “rocks.” Image courtesy of the Port.

These amenities serve far more than visitors. Granite Lake Park hosts festivals, weddings, dog shows, farmers markets, and full and half marathons—all at no cost. “Our goal is to encourage everyone—locals and visitors alike—to enjoy this unique outdoor space, without cost being a barrier,” Brigham said.

Much of the east end of the waterfront has also evolved into a hub for recreation, hospitality, and retail. A hotel, driving range, Walmart, Costco, Chef’s Store, coffee shop, winery, brewery, restaurants, community waterfront park, and a 75-stall RV park are all within easy walking distance of the 7th Street dock and Granite Lake Park.

Keeping Infrastructure Strong

Port operations involve more than new development—they require ongoing care for existing assets and steady behind-the-scenes work to keep facilities safe and functional.

In September 2026, the port will replace its 7th Street Cruise Boat Dock using a \$1.5 million state appropriation secured with support from District 9 legislators: Senator Schoesler and Representatives Dye and Schmick.

The 14th Street cargo facility, used exclusively to support the cruise industry since 2007, is also under review. The port is analyzing its completed condition assessment and will finish stakeholder engagement by November 2026 to help commissioners determine the facility’s future.

Since 2012, the port has steadily built broadband infrastructure throughout Asotin County. In 2022, it connected the county’s two incorporated cities—Clarkston and Asotin—and has since extended dark fiber to rural households, helping close long-standing connectivity gaps.

Development and Adaptation

Like many agencies in Eastern Washington, the Port of Clarkston relies on creative strategies to stay competitive and support business growth. As a border community just one mile from Lewiston, Idaho, the port commission has shown a willingness to sell property when a strong business case exists—and when the land can be strategically replaced.

Selling parcels to support private investment and create living-wage jobs has already paid off.

“The port has sold over 13 acres of waterfront property, replaced it with other sites, and used the money we made to buy good, unencumbered property still on the waterfront,” said Executive Director Chris Rasmussen. “We did that for the Chef’s Store, sold more land to Renaissance Marine Group to help support their expansion, then used that money to buy back 10.2 acres for future port development.”

From agriculture and freight to tourism, broadband, and private-sector partnerships, the Port of Clarkston continues to evolve in response to changing community needs and emerging economic opportunities. That adaptability is a point of pride.

“The port is steadfast in its goal to create prosperity within Asotin County by continuing to evolve, focusing on creativity, sustainability, and collaborative partnerships,” said Rasmussen.



A beautiful daytime sight, the Port looks just as good at night. Image courtesy of the Port.

Legislative Spotlight: Highlighting your WPPA Government Relations Team



NAME: Carly Michiels

TITLE: Senior Director of Environmental Policy

POLICY FOCUS AREA: Energy, environment and natural resources, land use management, permitting

Walk-up Public Testimony Song: Mr. Blue Sky, Electric Light Orchestra

If you could pass one lighthearted-just-for-fun law, what would it be?

Wisconsin cheese curds for every public-school lunch.

What is one policy issue you are eager to tackle this upcoming 2027 Legislative Session?

I'm looking forward to advancing conversations about energy availability and affordability. Last session, [E3 released a report](#) projecting a shortfall of approximately 9 GW of effective capacity in the Pacific Northwest region by 2030. I am eager to advocate for solutions that begin addressing this energy gap, particularly as

ports pursue decarbonization and large-scale shore power projects that require significant infrastructure upgrades and increase electricity demand.

What is the best advice you received working in government relations?

When you are working on something, especially if it is complicated policy or an emerging topic, before you start meeting with anyone on it... ask yourself if you could explain it to Hank Hill (King of the Hill). Once you can do that, you're good to go!

What is your go-to legislative session de-stressor?

Hot yoga is helpful both for session and the "Big Dark" winter.

One thing you cannot survive without during a long day at the Capitol?

Seeing all our port colleagues in the halls of the Capitol and visiting our offices! And of course, coffee.



NAME: James Cockburn

TITLE: Director of Marinas and Public Policy

POLICY FOCUS AREA: Governance, marinas, labor relations and workforce, procurement and public works, recreation and tourism

Walk-up Public Testimony Song: I'm on a Boat, Lonely Island

If you could pass one lighthearted-just-for-fun law, what would it be?

Requiring all restaurants and bars to serve wine in quality glassware and at appropriate temperatures.

What is one policy issue you are eager to tackle this upcoming 2027 Legislative Session?

I am looking forward to pushing for a robust conversation about updating the Public Records Act (PRA) to reflect the changes in how local governments communicate, manage records, and serve the public that have occurred in the last few decades. I hope we can

convene the right stakeholders to bring forward consensus solutions that make the PRA work better for everyone involved, particularly smaller ports.

What is the best advice you received working in government relations?

You never know who your bill's "hero" is going to be. Sometimes it's a legislator you would not expect, so you need to keep an open mind about everyone.

What is your go-to legislative session de-stressor?

Listening to audio books or sports podcasts, journaling, or going on walks around campus.

One thing you cannot survive without during a long day at the Capitol?

Group chats with fellow lobbyists to get the real dirt and keep it light and irreverent.



NAME: Martin Presley

TITLE: Director of Transportation and Economic Development Policy

POLICY FOCUS AREA: Aviation, broadband, economic development, revenue and taxes, transportation, workforce

Walk-up Public Testimony Song: Steam Powered Aereo Plane, John Hartford

If you could pass one lighthearted-just-for-fun law, what would it be?

A March Madness-type tournament for all the Washington State designated symbols. State Cactus vs. State Sandstone is a mid-major barn burner.

What is one policy issue you are eager to tackle this upcoming 2027 Legislative Session?

Anything involving the facilitation of maritime prosperity zones. Defense Industrial Base Institute, Commerce, WPPA, and others are still in the data gathering phase to gain a better understanding of Washington's shipbuilding and maintenance

capacity, so policy development will come a bit later. But this stands to be an influential economic development item driven by our member ports.

What is the best advice you received working in government relations?

Trust but verify. That, and just pick up the phone and call them.

What is your go-to legislative session de-stressor?

A multi-hour session of cleaning and listening to my records. Part fun and part inventory cataloging!

One thing you cannot survive without during a long day at the Capitol?

Cheeky commentary with my closest colleagues. Getting a laugh brightens up the day.



NAME: Eric ffitch

TITLE: The Boss

POLICY FOCUS AREA: Governance, revenue and taxes, WA State Trade Strategy

Walk-up Public Testimony Song: "Feel me Flow," Naughty by Nature

If you could pass one lighthearted-just-for-fun law, what would it be?

Easy: Ban student driver bumper stickers!

Second choice: if you're a pizza restaurant licensed in Washington, it's compulsory to sell pizza by-the-slice.

(Honorable mention...coffee shops are required to open by 7am at the latest)

What is one policy issue you are eager to tackle this upcoming 2027 Legislative Session?

Fixing the commissioner appointment process, of course! You're probably tired of hearing me say "I am not going to lobby any issues this year," as I continue to try to step aside and delegate the advocacy role to our extremely competent team. BUT I do reserve the right to pick one niche issue each year just so I can keep the lobbying muscles working, and this year we will change one "must" to a "may" and bring a bit more transparency to the special purpose district appointment process.

OH, and hopefully we can pass a range of policies that make our trade-driven sectors more competitive!

What is the best advice you received working in government relations?

Always start with the answer, then provide the explanation. Let me explain: early in my career with the Port of Seattle, I would be in meetings with legislators and they'd ask a tough question like "Is it true that Sea-Tac Airport is..." And being me, I always thought I had a good answer. So I'd launch into the explanation, and five minutes later end with "so to answer your question, no." My lobbyist at the time, a dear friend and early mentor, pulled me aside after one such meeting and suggested I invert the process. He pointed out that, without initially answering the question, my in-depth explanation made the person who'd asked just assume I was BS-ing. By saying, "the answer is no, and here is why..." you've immediately answered their inquiry, then provided the info. I still try to always use this structure today when answering tough questions. And I think it's served me well!

What is your go-to legislative session de-stressor?

~~Whiskey~~-I mean, I really enjoy getting home and cooking a big elaborate meal with lots of steps that utilizes every dish in the kitchen. Then slowly cleaning up - usually there is a basketball game on the TV within view.

One thing you cannot survive without during a long day at the Capitol?

~~Whiskey~~-I mean, coffee. And, as lame as it sounds, I think a little bit of morning exercise is essential. The last few years, walking Arthur in the pitch black and the pouring rain has been strangely calming before a long day at the office.

Knowing the Waters

For the August 2026 edition of Knowing the Waters, we have a guest column! Sara Frase fills in for Tim Schermetzler this month with an update on the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Industrial Stormwater General Permit (ISGP) administered by the Washington Department of Ecology. Sara has been advocating on behalf of ports regarding this legislation for the past several years, and she answers several common questions that ports may have about the ISGP process. Read more [here](#).

Grants and Resources for Ports

Please Take Our Survey: 2026 Ports Survey – respond by September 30, 2026

As we mentioned in past Manifests, WPPA is working with Jim Darling of Leeward Strategies and Maul Foster & Alongi to update our [Port Governance and Management Guide](#). This work will include research and consultation with reviewers from our membership, and an important piece is taking place this month with our [2026 Ports Survey](#). Please take fifteen minutes before the end of September to provide your responses and help us get a more complete picture of how ports are operating and administering their responsibilities in their communities. We thank you in advance!

United States Marine Highway Program – Applications due August 31, 2026

There is up to \$10,772,270 available in Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 under the United States Marine Highway Program (USMHP), administered by the Maritime Administration (MARAD). Funds for the USMHP are awarded on a competitive basis to projects on designated U.S. Marine Highway Routes that provide a coordinated and capable alternative to landside transportation or that promote marine highway transportation.

Applications are due August 31, 2026, at 11:59:59 pm Eastern Daylight Time.

Important Changes for FY 2026:

- Rating rubrics have been updated to align with statutory requirements.
- "Workforce Development and Job Quality" has been **removed** as a selection consideration.
- "Innovative Technology" has been **added** as a new selection consideration. *
- The criteria have been aligned with current Executive Orders and Administration priorities.

***Innovative Technology Section:** If you need help, Xochitl Castañeda (xochitl.castaneda@dot.gov) is available to discuss this or any section of the USMHP program and explore how your Port's project incorporates novel approaches (such as deploying advanced technologies to enhance safety or efficiency, using innovative methods in design and construction to reduce costs, or integrating solutions that strengthen port resilience). Without this section, your applications may not be accepted.

Marine Highway Route Sponsors Contact Information:

- Port of Portland: Richard Vincent Richard.Vincent@portofportland.com
- State of Alaska: Judy Chapman judy.chapman@alaska.gov
- Port of Port Angeles: Katherine Frazier: katharinef@portofpa.com

CERB Micro-Grants for Rural Ports – Applications Due September 14

CERB is still accepting applications for its Rural Ports Program! The last round of available funding is focused on micro-grants in support of projects that cost \$200,000 or less. These micro-grants range from \$20,000 to \$100,000, with no fund match requirement, and can be utilized for a slew of infrastructure repair, improvement, and development activities. Just for example, WPPA member Ports have used these micro-grants to improve parking in support of nearby businesses and even to upgrade electric infrastructure at local fairgrounds. **Applications are due to CERB by September 14th** and supporting documents can be found on [CERB's website](#).

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Program – Applications Accepted on a Rolling Basis, Current Round Closing September 30

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Program provides **technical and financial assistance for projects that protect and restore fish and wildlife habitats in priority coastal ecosystems**. Washington port districts may be eligible as special district governments, making the program potentially relevant for shoreline, estuary, wetland, fish habitat, and related coastal restoration projects.

Awards may range from \$1 to \$500,000, and no matching funds are required. Interested applicants must contact their local Coastal Program office before developing or submitting an application because projects are developed collaboratively with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff. **Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, with the current federal opportunity listing closing September 30, 2026.**

Washington Recreation and Conservation Grant Opportunities: *Applications due November 3*

Boating Facilities Program (RCO)

[Washington Recreation and Conservation Office](#) offers the [Boating Facilities Program](#) funds, which supports eligible entities to **acquire, develop, and renovate facilities for motorized boats and other watercraft**. This can apply to boat ramps, guest moorage, support facilities, and more. The information manual for the 2026 round of grants will be published in August, and the application webinar is on August 4. These grants come around every second year on the even years (2022, 2024, 2026, 2028...), so don't wait until 2028 if you have a boat facilities project to start now.

- **Applications are due on November 3, 2026.**
- A [comprehensive recreation or conservation plan is required for application](#) and must be submitted by September 1, 2026.
- The grant program has a 25% match requirement.

Firearms and Archer Range Recreation Program (RCO)

Washington RCO is offering grants for the **acquisition, development, and renovation of firearm ranges and archery training facilities** on the same timeline as the Boating Facilities Program. The [Firearms and Archer Range Recreation Program](#) has a 50% match requirement and a grant limit of \$150,000, with a total available funding of \$600,000.

USDA Grants and Loans - *Applications Accepted on Rolling Basis*

USDA Community Facilities Program

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers an ongoing [Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program](#) for public bodies (including ports), community-based non-profit corporations, or Federally Recognized Tribes to **develop essential community facilities in rural areas** (cities, villages, townships and towns including Federally Recognized Tribal Lands with no more than 20,000 residents according to the latest [U.S. Census Data](#)). Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis from October 1-September 30.

The program **prioritizes small communities with a population of 5,500 or less** and low-income communities having a median household income below 80% of the state non-metropolitan median household income.

USDA Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program

USDA offers an ongoing [Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program](#) to provide **funding for clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, sanitary solid waste disposal, and storm water drainage** to households and businesses in eligible rural areas (rural areas and towns with populations of 10,000 or less, Tribal lands in rural areas, and Colonias).

Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis from October 1-September 30.

USDA Strategic Economic and Community Development (SECD) funding to support implementation of strategic community investment plans

The [SECD program](#) is a **funding program to support multi-jurisdictional and multi-sectoral strategic community investment plans**. Created by local stakeholders, these plans help build rural prosperity by amplifying a community's unique strengths. For more information, reach out to rd.secd@usda.gov.

To be eligible for SECD, a project must:

- Be eligible for the covered program (listed below).
- Be carried out in a rural area.
- Support a multi-jurisdictional and multi-sectoral strategic community investment plan.

Covered Rural Development Programs

Priority may be given to applications submitted through the following programs:

- [Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program](#) (application open)
- [Community Facilities Guaranteed Loan Program](#) (application open)
- [Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Program](#) (application open)
- [Water and Waste Disposal Loan Guarantees](#) (application open)
- [Rural Business Development Grants](#) (*applications currently closed*)
- [Community Connect Grants](#) (*applications currently closed*)

EPA Targeted Brownfields Assessments – Applications Accepted on Rolling Basis

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has once again offered funding to support communities, through the [Targeted Brownfields Assessments \(TBA\) in Region 10](#) (Alaska, Oregon, Idaho, and Washington), with **free environmental assessments, cleanup planning, and visioning services for brownfield properties** with redevelopment potential. Applications are currently open and accepted on a rolling basis.

Visit the [website](#) or view the [factsheet](#) for more information about the program, and reach out to the EPA Region 10 TBA Coordinator, Molly Vaughan (vaughan.molly@epa.gov) with questions or with a completed [application form](#).

WSDOT Seeks Feedback on Draft 2026 Freight System Plan

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is requesting public review and feedback on the draft 2026 Freight System Plan (FSP), which guides statewide freight policy and investment decisions across all freight modes, including trucking, rail, air cargo, barges, and cargo shipping. This feedback period follows on a [previous online open house](#) which was advertised in a previous version of the WPPA Manifest.

Comments on the draft plan are due by **September 13, 2026**, and will help inform the final version, expected to be published this fall. Feedback can be submitted to FreightPlan@wsdot.wa.gov. When commenting, please reference the applicable section, appendix, and page number. A comment form is also available on the project website.

Learn more and review the draft plan on the [Freight System Plan webpage](#).

Washington Zero-Emission Incentive Program – Funding Available Now

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) [Washington Zero-Emission Incentive Program \(WAZIP\)](#) is offering up to \$112 million in vouchers to help businesses purchase zero-emission medium and heavy-duty (MHD) commercial vehicles and equipment. **Technical assistance is available [here](#)** on the WAZIP webpage.

MRSC Trainings for Local Government: Virtual and In-Person

Upcoming Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington (**MRSC**) **webinars are open for registration**, covering a variety of topics. Check out [their website](#) for a list of all currently planned trainings; additional information will be added as it becomes available.

Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) Diesel Program – Grants Available

If your organization's diesel emissions reduction project prioritizes old, large engines, engines with daily usage, and/or engines that operate within areas or close to businesses or communities with high diesel pollution, [send your project information to PSCAA](#) for a chance to receive a 25-60% reimbursement for diesel equipment replacement.

Clean Buildings Performance Standards: Resources and Grants Available

The [Tier 1 Early Adopter Incentive Program](#) will provide up to \$16 million in incentives for approved applicants. Tier 1 applies to non-residential, hotel, motel, and dormitory buildings greater than 50,000 square feet. Demonstrated early compliance with the Clean Buildings Performance Standard can earn building owners a one-time base incentive payment of \$2/square foot, up to \$75 million. This incentive is to cover up to half the cost of energy-saving measures identified in an energy audit. A [Tier 1 incentives estimator](#) is now available to assist building owners in planning their Clean Buildings Performance Standard compliance path.

The [Tier 2 Early Adopter Incentive Program](#) will provide a base incentive of \$0.30/square foot to owners of buildings between 20,000-50,001 square feet who benchmark their building's energy use, identify an energy use intensity target, and develop and implement an energy management plan and operations and maintenance program. Additional incentives are available for multifamily building owners who are willing to sign an [anti-displacement agreement](#).

Commerce Clean Energy Tax Credit Assistance Program

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 \(CETCAP\)](#).

Federal clean energy tax credits are expiring soon – act soon if you have a project for which you are seeking federal clean energy tax credits. Expiration dates vary by project/technology type.

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 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.

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](#).

DOE Energy Ready Charging Smart Program – free technical assistance

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) [Energy Ready Charging Smart Program](#) offers free technical assistance to help local governments adopt procedures and practices that facilitate the growth of electric vehicles (EVs).

DOE E2C Program Expert Match – free technical assistance

The DOE's [Energy to Communities \(E2C\): Expert Match](#) program offers free, short-term technical assistance to address near-term energy challenges in local communities.

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



Aerial view of Port of Grays Harbor, courtesy of the Port

WPPA Port Academy Series Fall Edition:

September 16-17 at the Port of Grays Harbor

Attention Port Staff: [Registration](#) is still open for the Fall Edition of the [Port Academy Series of 2026](#)! We are excited to share that this class will take place at the Port of Grays Harbor on Thursday, September 17th from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., with optional activities taking place on the afternoon of Wednesday the 16th. Designed primarily for port staff, the Port Academy Series is ideal for those looking to deepen their understanding of port governance, operations, environmental stewardship, and long-range planning. Whether you are a Port Manager, Finance Officer, Environmental Specialist, or work in another area of port operations, this event offers a practical opportunity

to learn from peers and explore approaches that may be applicable to your own port. Lunch is provided and to support meaningful discussion, registration is limited to a small group of 25 participants. If you have any questions, please contact [James Cockburn](#).



Lounge at the Renaissance Hotel, courtesy of the Hotel

Environmental Seminar: September 24-25 at the Renaissance Hotel, Seattle

[Registration](#) is open for the [WPPA Environmental Seminar](#), taking place this September at the Renaissance Hotel in downtown Seattle! Find hotel information on [our FAQ page](#) and make your reservations before the block closes on 9/2! This year will feature an optional tour at the Port of Seattle, and 1.5 days of engaging speakers, meaningful conversations, and plenty of networking time with your peers (check out the [agenda here](#)). You can contact [Mandy Lill](#) if you have any questions or if you are interested in [sponsoring this event](#). We have several great options that give you various levels of exposure. We hope to see you in Seattle!



Campbell's Resort on Lake Chelan, courtesy of the Resort

Small Ports: Oct. 22-23, Campbell's Resort, Chelan

Registration will open later this week for the WPPA Small Ports Seminar, returning to the always-popular Campbell's Resort in beautiful Lake Chelan. This year's agenda features timely topics including Website Best Practices & ADA Compliance, Port Preparedness & Emergency Response, and the latest updates from the Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB). In addition to informative sessions, attendees will have plenty of opportunities to connect with peers, exchange ideas, and share experiences with colleagues from ports across the state. Watch for your registration email later

this week, and please contact [Mandy Lill](#) if you have any questions or do not receive the invitation.

Sponsorship opportunities are also still available. If you're interested in learning more, Mandy would be happy to provide additional information. We look forward to seeing you in Lake Chelan!

Save The Dates for WPPA's Winter 2026 and Spring 2027 Conference Calendar

- **Winter Meeting: Dec 9-11**, Hilton Vancouver
 - *Formerly known as the Annual Meeting*
- **2027 Spring Meeting: May 19-21**, Historic Davenport Hotel, Spokane
- **2027 Finance & Administration Seminar: June 23-25**, Courtyard by Marriott Richland, Richland



The grind never stops for Arthur at WPPA HQ.

As Arthur Sees It

Notes from the Executive Director and his dog

For regular readers of the meandering thoughts of Arthur and me, you might remember our March discussion of the current shipbuilding push that has catalyzed action across the US. At that time, a combination of federal rumblings around major maritime industrial investments coincided with local enthusiasm for promoting the competitiveness of our shipyards, and WPPA responded by forming our Maritime Industrial Base Coalition (MIBC). Comprised of fourteen port members with shipyard tenants or other maritime manufacturing interests, the MIBC hired a consultant to begin a landscape analysis of Washington's maritime industrial base. With a broad array of stakeholders and direct engagement with shipyards around the state, the analysis identified current capacity constraints in Washington and possible opportunities to overcome them and make progress in expanding our capacity and possibly securing new investment.

A key early recommendation of the MIBC was that Washington put itself forward for potential selection as the host of Maritime Prosperity

Zones (MPZ), an anticipated federal designation that would target investment and activity in specific areas around the U.S. We worked directly with the WA State Department of Commerce and Governor Ferguson's office to officially request that the process for MPZ designation commence, and in early July the Governor wrote to the Defense Industrial Base Institute at Northeastern University to make that ask. This was significant, as it indicated that the highest levels of Washington's elected leadership are committed to promoting our maritime industrial base. It is just the beginning of the process, and since that letter went in, we have continued to work with other stakeholders—including the US Navy—to advocate for the MPZ designation. Elected leaders in the Washington State Legislature have also indicated an interest, and WA's congressional delegation in DC is engaged in the work as well. [A recent Seattle Times editorial suggests just how many local eyes are on the shipbuilding conversation](#), and continues to add to the gathering momentum to make real progress in this area.

At the same time, our MIBC work continues. We kicked off Phase II in August, which will generate policy recommendations that state and federal elected officials can consider going into 2027. This includes the growing chatter around a prospective first-of-its-kind document for the state of Washington: a Maritime Strategic Plan (MSP). Other states pursuing MPZ status have used MSPs to demonstrate their collective support for pursuing more maritime manufacturing opportunities. On August 19th, Governor Ferguson convened his Economic Development Council for the first time, and the concept of maritime competitiveness has already been put forward as an agenda item the group should consider. If an MSP comes out of that work or develops through the MIBC Phase II recommendations (or both), WPPA is poised to be a leader in that planning process. Along with partners like the Washington Maritime Federation—where we hold a board seat—and industry partners like the Pacific Northwest Defense Coalition and the Career Connect Washington work being done by the Skagit College Center of Excellence for Marine Manufacturing and Technology, we must seek a broad coalition to ensure that

any MSP or other state plan reflects the breadth and existing natural strengths of our industry here. Fishing companies land their product at Washington ports, maritime training programs are taking hold at port facilities, recreational boaters drive activity at marinas around the state, and our ferry system continues to serve port communities and keep their economies moving.

There is no doubt that this can hold some promise of more economic opportunities, which is just the kind of thing our ports excel in helping to augment. Another recent opinion piece in the Seattle Times—penned by former WA Congressman Derek Kilmer and former New Hampshire Governor Chris Sununu—suggests as much in its discussion of the prospects for the Olympia Peninsula and Port Angeles. This [piece calls out the Port of Port Angeles](#) specifically, as it discusses how Clallam County can point the way for other rural communities across America. Port leaders also joined [Sununu and Kilmer for a discussion as part of their AEI-Brookings Commission on Rural Prosperity](#), with tours and a conversation at Peninsula College that identified the challenges and possibilities inherent to rural economic growth.

Securing new federal and state partnerships and investment in our maritime industrial base will not be easy. Ensuring that those investments support economic prosperity in rural Washington will not be simple either. But the spirit of partnership embodied in the MIBC work to this point, conversations like Kilmer hosted in Port Angeles, and even the Governor's Economic Development Council provide windows into how we can make progress. WPPA will stay in the thick of this work, bringing your perspectives to the fore and speaking loudly with one voice. Call me if you want to get more involved!

Washington Public Ports Association
360.943.0760 | www.washingtonports.org