

2023 Federal Government Affairs Agenda

Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) Reform

Secure implementation of the HMT reform provisions in the Water Resources Development Act of 2020. Secure appropriations for the “donor port” HMT rebate program authorized under Section 2106 of the 2014 Water Resources Reform and Development Act to compensate for the current structure and impacts of the HMT.

Seattle Harbor Deepening Project

Support design of the West Waterway portion of the Seattle Harbor Navigation Improvement Project, which will deepen the federal channels serving T-5 in Seattle Harbor.

Tacoma Harbor Deepening Project

Secure funding for design phase of the Tacoma Harbor Navigation Improvement Project. The project will deepen the Blair Waterway to accommodate ultra-large container ships at key NWSA cargo facilities. Explore opportunities to use clean dredged material to construct a nearshore aquatic habitat site.

National Freight Policy and Funding

Support efforts to secure resources made available through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Advocate for a strengthened national multimodal freight strategy and sustained federal funding for RAISE, INFRA and PIDP discretionary grants and other federal programs that support goods movement. Advocate for federal funding and other support for operations solutions to support a competitive rail system and to help alleviate supply chain congestion and environmental and community impacts. Support federal programs that help drayage truck drivers and railway workers achieve better wages and working conditions.

Trade Policy Advancement

Advocate for new trade agreements and productive engagement that ensure a fair and level playing field for mutually beneficial trade and that protect workers and the environment. The NWSA believes tariffs and quotas should be used as a measure of last resort and, when necessary, be narrowly targeted to minimize unintended impacts on American producers and consumers. The US should work with key trade partners in Asia to reduce tariffs in light of supply chain impacts, inflationary cost effects and overall strategic value relative to diplomatic and economic goals.

Puget Sound Restoration

Advocate for increased federal resources for habitat restoration and other strategies to sustain Chinook salmon populations and other species; for the cleanup of legacy contaminants; for managing stormwater runoff and for the reduction of underwater noise in Puget Sound in support of the recovery of Southern Resident Killer Whales. Support appropriations for the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project, the National Estuary Program, the Puget Sound Geographic Program, and the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund. Support reforms to federal regulatory processes to speed the approval and creation of NWSA and home port habitat sites.

Electrification, Diesel Emissions Reduction Programs and Renewable Energy

Support efforts to secure resources from the Inflation Reduction Act and other programs that support electrification, alternative fuel use, and other emissions reduction strategies at ports and adjacent communities. Support flexibility in Buy America and other domestic preference requirements to provide time for US manufacturers to achieve the scale needed to meet new demand for port equipment, including zero-emissions equipment, and to make their production lines compliant with federal requirements. Support programs to advance land and ocean-based renewable ocean energy development.

Federal Permitting

Support increasing regulatory staff funding for the US Army Corps of Engineers, NOAA Fisheries and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to reduce permit backlogs. Federal regulatory and permitting regimes should be applied consistently across the country. Significant modifications to federal permitting regulations should be made only through an act of Congress or a formal rulemaking process. The NWSA opposes changes to the process for permitting projects that jeopardize ports' ability to fulfill their economic, environmental and social missions.

Safe and Efficient Cargo Screening

Advocate for adequate CBP staffing levels to ensure efficient movement of cargo through the Puget Sound gateway. Pursue efforts to ensure the federal government resumes responsibility for funding CBP services, equipment and facility development.