



## Small ports seek \$48 million in federal funding

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**Published:**

January 12, 2016 3:49PM



Pile piles at the entrance to the Ilwaco channel are in need of major restoration. GUY GLENN PHOTO

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Ports in the Northwest are waiting to see if the nation's budget will include funding for small ports that often struggle to obtain federal dollars.

The Northwestern congressional delegation advocated that the President's Fiscal Year 2017 Budget set aside roughly \$48 million to maintain jetties and the channels leading to small ports. The funding would include Pacific County's Port of Ilwaco and Port of Chinook.

The budget plan is expected to come out on Feb. 1.

A letter signed by Oregon's U.S. Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley and Washington's Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell asked the U.S. Office of Management and Budget to recognize the needs of small ports.

"Despite the Administration's responsibility to fund these projects, small ports throughout the Northwest continue to be routinely overlooked in budget requests and remain chronically underfunded," the senators wrote.

The Pacific Northwest Waterways Association (PNWA), a regional, multi-industry association that focuses on trade, navigation and economic development policies, asked for \$2.1 million for the Port of Ilwaco out of the requested \$48 million.

PNWA also requested \$800,000 for the Port of Chinook.

Port Manager Guy Glenn said \$700,000 of the funding would go toward a major maintenance report on the Ilwaco channel pile dikes. The report could identify what is causing the increased siltation of the port's channel, Glenn said.

Glenn said he believes the navigation pile dikes, which help funnel water through the channel, are failing. The failure may also be connected to the Port's consistent dredging needs to maintain safe water levels, he said.

As a temporary solution, the port has established a critical area around marker 11 where the channel dips below the minimum depth of 16 feet and is working with corps and coast guard to realign the channel.

"Addressing the cause of siltation will hopefully reduce the need for annual maintenance at the mouth of the channel, which would save us money and effort," Glenn said.

