

# Sen. Cantwell is Legislator of the Year

'Freight senator' accepts association award from Pacific Northwest Waterways Association



[http://16749-presscdn-0-94.pagely.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/757184-Cantwell-award\\_02.jpg](http://16749-presscdn-0-94.pagely.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/757184-Cantwell-award_02.jpg)

U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., received an award from the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association at the organization's annual convention on Wednesday, held at the Hilton Vancouver Washington. (Ariane Kunze/The Columbian)

Buy this photo

By **Lauren Dake (/author/ldake)**, Columbian Political Writer

Published: October 12, 2016, 5:27 PM

2

Former U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood once reportedly called Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., the "freight senator."



The Pacific Northwest Waterways Association would likely agree. On Wednesday, Cantwell was in Vancouver to receive a Legislator of the Year award at the group's annual conference.

Cantwell introduced the multimodal freight grant program, which aims to reduce congestion at U.S. ports and improve efficiency.

"Some of you may realize this is a huge investment: \$4.5 billion over the next five years to improve freight infrastructure in the United States. I can't think of a better investment," Cantwell said at the award ceremony. "This is so much about moving products and services and prioritizing them when we have so few dollars and people have come up with estimates about how many dollars are invested and how many jobs they create as a result of that."

The act created a federal board modeled after the Washington State Freight Mobility Investment Board, according to The Seattle Times, which reported LaHood's comment about Cantwell in 2012.

Cantwell said Washington state served as a model for the legislation. And the Senator said Vancouver was a fitting place for her to accept the award.

"I don't think there is a community that is better poised and ready to continue the discussions we are having about the economy and how we grow in the future and our waterways in Vancouver," she said at the ceremony.

The first round of grants from the act were awarded this year and included \$759 million toward road, railway and highway projects. Two of the projects were in Washington, one in Seattle and the other in Tukwila. Coos Bay Rail in Oregon also received \$11 million.

Cantwell said she appreciated the award.

"I always say to people, we were trading a ton before Lewis and Clark showed up, OK?" she said. "So we are a trading region and we want to continue that, but we need to continue it in the right, safe and secure way, so thank you all very, very much for this award."



## **Lauren Dake (/author/ldake)**

**Columbian Political Writer**

**📞 360-735-4534**

**👤 @LaurenDake (<https://twitter.com/LaurenDake>)**

**✉️ [Send an Email \(mailto:lauren.dake@columbian.com\)](mailto:lauren.dake@columbian.com)**

**📌 [Facebook \(https://www.facebook.com/reporter.ldake\)](https://www.facebook.com/reporter.ldake)**