

WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT (WRDA)



The Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) is the main legislative vehicle for authorizing federal navigation projects and implementing policy changes for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Given PNWA's focus on federal navigation infrastructure policy and funding, WRDA is a key piece of legislation for our membership. We support keeping WRDA on a two year schedule and passage of a bill in 2018, to ensure timely and consistent authorization of navigation projects, and important changes to Corps policy. Our WRDA priorities are outlined below.

Seattle Harbor deepening project. PNWA supports authorization of the Seattle Harbor deepening project to meet the needs of larger vessels calling at the Port of Seattle. A Chief's report was completed in May 2018 in support of deepening the East and West Waterways of the Seattle Harbor to -57'. The deepening initiative seeks to protect jobs and preserve the infrastructure that allows Northwest farmers and manufacturers to connect to global export markets. Insufficient channel depths require ocean carriers to take on less cargo or delay departures, ultimately hindering their ability to serve the Puget Sound region. In addition, the Northwest Seaport Alliance faces competition from the Canadian ports of Vancouver and Prince Rupert, which currently have no depth limitation. Thousands of transportation jobs are at risk from cargo diversion to Canada alone, as are thousands of other jobs with shippers who rely on the Seattle seaport. PNWA seeks authorization of this project in the next WRDA, to increase capacity, access to global markets, and economic benefit for the Northwest Seaport Alliance, the Pacific Northwest and the nation.

Tacoma Harbor deepening study. PNWA supports authorization of a feasibility study to allow the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to re-evaluate channel depths in Tacoma Harbor that support international maritime trade. Tacoma Harbor's Hylebos, Blair and Sitcum Waterways serve over 20 cargo and water dependent industrial docks operated by the Port of Tacoma, the Northwest Seaport Alliance (NWSA), and other private entities. The NWSA is the nation's fourth largest container port complex and a key gateway for U.S. exports. The NWSA plays an important role in U.S. supply chains, with 64% of its import cargo clearing customs in the Midwest or other locations outside the Northwest. Deepening Tacoma Harbor is necessary to maintain a top-tier trade lane through the Pacific Northwest and will enable the NWSA to make a greater contribution to the national economy. The study is expected to have a total cost of \$3,000,000, with a federal share of \$1,500,000.

Port of Whitman County land trade. PNWA is supporting a land trade between the Port of Whitman County and the Corps, for the port to acquire the 564-acre Central Ferry North Habitat Management Unit (HMU). This land is currently managed by the Corps for wildlife habitat and if the trade is approved, the port would have to purchase comparable land to serve the same wildlife mitigation function. Should the Central Ferry location be acquired by the port, it would be zoned heavy-industrial and allow for the expansion of activities that already take place at the Port of Central Ferry such as grain shipping. The site is located north of the existing Port of Central Ferry, well placed to take advantage of adjacent existing rail access and in close proximity to barge operations on the Snake River. If developed, the acquisition would add needed industrial acreage and economic development opportunities in Southwestern Whitman County.

Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund. Significant Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) reforms were included in the Water Resources Reform & Development Act (WRRDA) of 2014 and the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2016. Still, there is more work to be done to truly fix how annual Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) revenues are provided to the Corps and maximized to benefit navigation users across the nation, including donor and small ports. PNWA supports full expenditure of annual HMT collections, designation of certain amounts to specific categories of ports (i.e. donor ports, small ports), and that all cargo benefits from fees assessed via the HMT. We are working with fellow stakeholders, Members of the Northwest Congressional and their staff, and Committee staff as HMTF language is drafted for inclusion in WRDA 2018.

