NAVIGATION FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS

FY2014 Corps funding. An FY2014 omnibus was passed in January 2014, requiring the Corps to develop a work plan for additional funding provided by Congress. PNWA played a key role in providing information about the value of Northwest navigation projects which were under consideration for this additional funding. Nearly every PNWA supported project received additional funding, for a total increase of over $22M for our projects in the region. Highlights included new start approval and funding for the Columbia River jetties major rehabilitation and the Seattle Harbor deepening study; $10.5M in additional repair funding for the Columbia River jetties; and critical channel maintenance funding for many of our small ports in the region.

FY2015 on track to be another successful year. An omnibus was passed in mid-December 2014, funding eleven of the twelve remaining appropriations bills through September 30, 2015. PNWA projects, most of which saw good support in the President’s FY2015 budget request, were funded in the bill. Similar to FY2014, the Corps was given 60 days to complete a work plan to spend “additional funding” provided by Congress. PNWA staff anticipated this outcome, and as of early December had already begun outreach efforts to our membership, the Corps and Congressional delegation. The Northwest has been extremely successful in the work plan process in the past and we are hopeful that we’ll see another positive round of vital funding in February when the work plan is scheduled to be released.

SECTION 214 PERMANENCE

Section 214 was first authorized as a temporary authority in the Water Resources Development Act of 2000. This authority allows the Corps to use funds contributed by non-Federal public entities and to expedite the processing of permits. Since 2000, PNWA has led a national coalition of ports, cities, counties and others to make Section 214 permanent. We are so pleased to report that our steadfast efforts over the last fourteen years have paid off and permanent language was secured in the Water Resources Reform & Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA). Non-federal sponsors in the Northwest and throughout the nation will now have the predictability they need to move vital economic development and environmental projects forward in a consistent, timely manner.

HARBOR MAINTENANCE TRUST FUND

For decades, PNWA has been a leader in discussions surrounding the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF). 2014 was no different. This past year brought passage of the WRRDA bill with many HMTF reforms, including a phased-in proposal to reach full spending by the year 2025, a permanent set aside for our nation’s small ports, and a rebate provision to help donor ports who suffer a competitive disadvantage with countries to the north or south. PNWA worked very closely with our port and navigation members, Members of Congress, committee staff, and many others to ensure the bill included these provisions. While the bill did not include every reform sought by the navigation community, it was an important step in the right direction. PNWA is committed to continuing the HMTF dialogue, and to identifying solutions that address the needs of all our members in the Northwest.

INLAND WATERWAYS TRUST FUND

In the waning days of this Congress, tax extender legislation passed with an increase to Inland Waterways Trust Fund (IWTF) collections. The bill brings a 5 cent per gallon diesel tax increase for toxboaters translating the inland waterways of the U.S. Towboaters will now contribute 29 cents per gallon to the fund, which supports construction and major rehabilitation projects on inland waters. This increase is supported by industry, including the Northwest towboat community. The legislation is seen as a positive step forward to ensuring the IWTF, which has been in arrears for quite some time, remains solvent for years to come.

SNAKE RIVER DREDGING

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Walla Walla District issued two Records of Decision on November 14th for the Lower Snake River Final Programmatic Sediment Management Plan as well as a dredging project for the Lower Snake River federal navigation channel this winter. Maintenance dredging last occurred in the lower Snake River navigation channel in the winter of 2005-2006. The Corps plans to use the dredged material to create shallow-water habitat for migrating juvenile salmon.

As expected, several environmental and tribal groups have filed suit. A subset of PNWA’s membership known as the Inland Ports & Navigation Group (IPNG) has been granted intervener status. The judge will hear oral arguments in this case on January 5th in Seattle, and is expected to rule on the injunction shortly thereafter. PNWA strongly supports the Corps’ plan to perform this long overdue, routine maintenance dredging.

COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY

The Columbia River Treaty was implemented by the United States and Canada in 1964 to govern Columbia River flows for flood control and power generation. After 50 years, both nations are examining its future. Bonneville Power Administration and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released a Regional Recommendation in December 2013, which included important statements regarding the current and future importance of navigation, hydropower, flood control and irrigation for the river system, the region, and our national security.

In 2014, the U.S. Department of State has been conducting a federal policy review process to determine whether to proceed with a Treaty modernization effort with Canada. PNWA continues to advocate for a U.S. position that acknowledges the significant existing regional programs that support healthy ecosystem function, takes into account how changes to flows may impact navigation, recognizes irrigated agriculture for the value it brings to the regional and national economy, and ensures equitable distribution of power benefits between the two nations.

DEAR COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS OF PNWA

This past year, PNWA celebrated its 80th Anniversary with another very successful year. This association played a significant role in so many regional and national discussions, and influenced decisions that will have an impact on the Northwest for years to come. Our membership of over 130 organizations is stronger than ever, and I am so pleased to have the opportunity to lead the association as we continue to mark our progress on the region and the nation. Together, we have made such a difference and I look forward to many more years of success.

Thank you for your continued support.
Kim B. Puzyk
General Manager, Port of Umatilla
PNWA President

PNWA prides itself on being known as a trusted resource for Congressional offices, federal agency officials and our membership. Over the last year, we have continued to build collaborative relationships in the Northwest and in Washington DC. Our efforts concentrated on championing passage of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 and ensuring Corps funding is in place to maintain our regional projects. We saw many successes in both areas, as well as in many other regional and national arenas. We continue to work hard on behalf of our members, and to provide a cooperative, consistent approach to supporting transportation, trade, energy and environmental policies and projects benefiting our Northwest communities.

PNWA WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS IN 2014

American Waterways Operators (AWO) GEI Consultants Port of Port Angeles Vancouver Energy

PNWA supports projects saw an increase of over $22M in the FY2014 work plan

PNWA is fighting hard for Snake River dredging to occur this winter

INLAND WATERWAYS TRUST FUND

SNAKE RIVER DREDGING

COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY

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BREAKING NEWS: On January 5, 2015, Washington District Court Judge James Robart denied the injunction to halt Snake River dredging. Snake River dredging will occur around the clock January 12th - February 28th.

PNWA 2015 EVENTS

Regional Meetings
-Puget Sound February 12, 2015 Port of Seattle Seattle, WA
-Eastern Washington/ Northern Idaho February 17, 2015 Port of Benton Richland, WA
-Lower Columbia River/ Oregon Coast February 19, 2015 Port of Portland Portland, OR
-Mission to Washington March 1 – 5, 2015 The Sofitel Hotel Washington, DC
-Summer Conference June 22 – 24, 2015 Hood River Inn
-Annual Convention October 7-9, 2015 Embassy Suites Portland

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See you soon!