



# Nor'wester newsletter

Issue #751 February 10, 2021

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## Thank you 2021 Mission to Washington sponsor

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Thank you to our newest [2021 Mission to Washington](#) sponsor for your generous support!

### **Bronze Sponsor**

Port of Ilwaco

*Additional sponsorships are available.* Increase your organization's visibility to our members, partners and friends while supporting PNWA's advocacy efforts. [Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum levels](#) are available. [Sign up online](#) when you register for the conference or [contact Randi Besser](#).

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## PNWA, partners call for maritime industry COVID-19 relief

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PNWA joined a coalition of regional and national partners earlier this month in requesting that [Congress](#) and [the Administration](#) provide \$3.5 billion to the newly enacted Maritime Transportation System Emergency Relief Program to bring much needed relief to the maritime industry in light of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Maritime Transportation System Emergency Relief Program was created by the

National Defense Authorization Act of 2020. This new program, the only one of its kind, authorizes the Maritime Administration to solicit applications for aid from those across the maritime industry, both inland and coastal, and provide grants to those most in need due to emergencies or disasters, including the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

February 2, 2021

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Senate Majority Leader  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Republican Leader  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
House Republican Leader  
H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Schumer, Senate Republican Leader McConnell, and House Republican Leader McCarthy,

As Congress continues the process of developing the next COVID-19 relief package, it is critical that this package include emergency relief for our Nation's maritime transportation system. In the year since the virus was first detected in the United States the maritime industry has endured significant hardships and has experienced substantial impacts to business. Congress must take immediate steps to ensure that the whole of the maritime transportation system has the resources necessary to address the unique and unexpected challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our maritime transportation system and the critical workers employed throughout this system have kept vital goods moving to medical professionals and first responders, have ensured that our Nation's shelves remain stocked, and have enabled commerce to continue flowing during these uncertain times. Ports that are located in rural areas have propped up local economies, dispensing critical public services while providing assistance to small businesses, oftentimes at the ports' own expense. Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, over 650,000 Americans were directly employed in jobs generated through the movement of marine cargo and through vessel activity while 30.8 million total jobs were supported by cargo moving through America's deep-draft ports.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 crisis has had a significantly negative impact on the maritime industry. Despite container surges at several large ports, commercial cargo volumes have plummeted across the industry - total waterborne trade volume is down 5.5% compared to last year, while the value of this trade has crashed by 12.7% totaling \$200 billion. Passenger movements remain virtually nonexistent with operations not expected to resume for months. Expenses have greatly increased due to COVID-19 protocols and precautions that have been put in place to ensure the health and safety of staff, and these extra costs borne by the industry to keep supply lines open are above and beyond the normal costs of operations.

With an uncertain outlook, these trends are likely to continue and intensify as the COVID-19 pandemic peaks over the coming months. To date, no dedicated funding has been provided in any of the COVID-19 legislative packages to assist the maritime transportation system despite emergency relief being provided to other modes of transportation.

We urge you to include emergency relief for the maritime industry in the next COVID-19 package through the Maritime Transportation System Emergency Relief Program, which was created by the National Defense Authorization Act of 2020 (P.L. 116-263). This new program, the only one of its kind, authorizes the Maritime Administration to solicit applications for aid from those across the maritime industry, both inland and coastal, and provide grants to those most in need due to emergencies or disasters. This includes aid to help mitigate the impacts of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

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## Port of Skagit is growing; adding two new positions

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# Port of Skagit

A number of projects and developments that began in 2020 at the Port of Skagit continue to move forward, along with new projects that are set to begin this year. This realized and anticipated growth has prompted the addition of two new professional positions with the Port.

A Project Manager position and an Environmental Planning Specialist position have been added to the Port team and are currently [posted on the Port's website](#). The Project Manager position will provide support for a number of current and future construction projects at Port of Skagit properties. The recent increase in private and public development projects, including the construction of hangar buildings, expanded apron surface and new tenant construction at Skagit Regional Airport and Bayview Business Park has led to the need for an additional staff person to support these and other projects, from start to finish.

Similarly, the new Environmental Planning Specialist position will support a variety of projects and help manage many aspects of the anticipated growth, including permitting, planning and environmental stewardship.

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## Merkley, Wyden reintroduce Climate Smart Ports Act

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Oregon's U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley is leading five of his Senate colleagues - including U.S. Senator Ron Wyden - in introducing the [Climate Smart Ports Act](#). This legislation would create a \$1 billion per year federal program dedicated to improving sustainability measures at America's ports. The legislation was also introduced in the House by Rep. Nanette Diaz Barragan. PNWA supports this bill.

The Climate Smart Ports Act would assist ports and port users in reducing harmful pollution by replacing cargo handling equipment, port harbor craft, cargo delivery trucks, and more with zero-emissions equipment and technology. In addition, the legislation would help ports develop onsite clean energy microgrids to power their facilities and equipment, and authorizes an additional \$50 million per year for the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act to be spent specifically on reducing port emissions.



[Learn more here](#)

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## EPA seeks Diesel Emissions Reduction Act grant applications

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EPA's Office of Transportation and Air Quality is soliciting applications nationwide for projects that achieve significant reductions in diesel emissions. Priority for funding is given to fleets operating in areas designated as having poor air quality and fleets which service goods movement facilities. Further priority for funding is given to projects with outcomes that benefit affected communities, those that engage affected communities in the design and

performance of the project, and those which demonstrate the ability to promote and continue efforts to reduce emissions after the project has ended. EPA anticipates awarding approximately \$46 million in DERA funding under this announcement.

[Learn more here](#)

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## Congressional staff updates

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### *Departures*

**Deputy State Director Rosa McLeod** left the office of Sen. Maria Cantwell (D, WA) for a government relations position in Tacoma.

**Legislative Assistant Jessica Mulligan** left the office of Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D, WA-7).

### *Arrivals*

**David Marten** has been promoted from Legislative Assistant to Legislative Director for Sen. Maria Cantwell (D, WA).

**Michael Bauduy** is new legislative assistant in the office of Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D, WA-7).



