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MARAD has announced two new grant opportunities for projects that will reduce the impact of maritime engine exhaust. One grant up to \$750K will be awarded for the "[Marine Vessel Exhaust Gas Cleaning and Selective Catalytic Reduction](#)" program, to demonstrate the use of exhaust gas scrubbing systems for marine vessels. Applications must be submitted by June 19th. Two grants will be awarded for the "[Energy Conservation](#)" program, which examines the emissions reductions from alternative fuel use or energy conservation technology. The program funding cap is \$1.330M and applications must be submitted by June 11th. Both programs require a 50% match from project sponsors. For more information, visit <http://www.grants.gov/>.

**Final Water of the US rulemaking released**

On May 27, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Army Corps of Engineers released their final rule regarding the definition of "waters of the United States" (WOTUS). Since the draft rule was released in April 2014, stakeholders have been very vocal with their concerns about expanding the WOTUS definition under the Clean Water Act. [PNWA submitted comments](#) late last year outlining the Northwest perspective and a number of concerns from farmers and ports, including the potential impacts on land use decisions, permit review times, mitigation requirements and supply chain delays.

Congress is currently considering legislation to prevent implementation of this rule. Earlier this month, the House passed a bill to require EPA and the Corps to withdraw the rule and craft a new version with greater stakeholder input. A similar bill has been introduced in the Senate. PNWA will be tracking this issue, and will alert our members as additional information is available.

## Corps of Engineers announces plans for 14-week Columbia Snake River System lock closure

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has officially announced the next extended lock closure on the [Columbia Snake River System](#). The planned 14-week outage will take place from December 12, 2016 through March 20, 2017. PNWA has advocated for funding for the closure over the last few years, to ensure that one coordinated event can occur in FY2017, and we are very pleased that the federal government has continued to make significant investments in the efficiency, safety and reliability of the Columbia Snake River System. With grain and other cargo volumes in the Northwest expected to increase considerably over the next decade, these repairs will allow our region to handle growth for many years to come.

This planned lock closure builds on the success we saw during the 15-week closure in winter 2010-2011. PNWA is working closely with the Corps to mimic the communications effort during the past event and to ensure that key river system stakeholders are updated throughout the planning and closure process. "The successful 2011 coordinated maintenance closure of our river system is now viewed as a national model. There was a high level of communication between the Corps and river users, and the end result was a very smooth process which helped reduce the impacts to growers and shippers," stated Kristin Meira, Executive Director of PNWA. "This type of planned and coordinated event is very different from an emergency or permanent closure. Early notice and advance planning of this kind allows grain growers, shippers and buyers overseas to coordinate the most ideal time to move cargo. During the 2011 event we saw that many folks chose to barge their goods prior to the closure, or hold product until the barge system reopened. When the locks went back in service, there was a flurry of activity and we saw the cargo return to barge transportation - the most efficient, lowest cost, most environmentally friendly way to move goods."

As part of the communications effort, the Corps will be holding outreach meetings and providing other updates for stakeholders of the river system. To get updates from the Corps on the extended closure, please email your name, organization, and email address to [fy17lockoutage@usace.army.mil](mailto:fy17lockoutage@usace.army.mil).

For more information, please view our [fact sheet](#), [press release](#) or [contact the Corps directly](#).

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