



Nor'wester Newsletter

Issue # 582 | July 7, 2016

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Port of Coos Bay snags important U.S. DOT FASTLANE funding

The U.S. Department of Transportation has announced the recipients of the [2016 FASTLANE program](#). FASTLANE is for projects that will have a regional or national impact by enabling more efficient freight movement through congestion reduction or increased capacity. This year, over \$700M in grants were awarded for the program and one PNWA member was among the 18 projects selected nationwide.

The Port of Coos Bay received \$11M to fund their Coos Bay Rail Line Tunnel Rehabilitation project. The project, which will cost a total of \$19.5M, will bring improvements to several bridges and tunnels on the Coos Bay Rail line, which is the only rail line that connects the Port of Coos Bay to regional rail networks. The project will provide safety upgrades to bring the line up to current operating standards. This project has had consistent federal, state and local support, and has successfully competed for TIGER and ConnectOregon funds as well.

PNWA was pleased to support the Port of Coos Bay application, and we are excited to congratulate the Port on this critical funding award!

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DHS announces 2016 Port Security Grant Program recipients

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has released the recipients of the 2016 Port Security Grant Program (PSGP). The PSGP provides funding for programs that support port-wide security protocols, and increase resiliency and recovery at ports, maritime facilities, and state and local governments. The PSGP was funded at \$100M in fiscal year 2016, and many of our members competed successfully in the process. PNWA congratulates Tidewater Barge Lines and the Ports of Anacortes, Everett, Longview, Port Angeles, Tacoma and Vancouver USA on their awards in this round of the program.

PNWA is very supportive of the PSGP and continues to advocate for fully funding the program in FY2017 and beyond. The program is authorized at \$400M, but is proposed to receive \$100M in both the House and Senate FY2017 Homeland Security Appropriations bills. For more information and a [complete list of 2016 grant recipients](#), visit the [FEMA website](#).

NOAA Fisheries releases fact sheet on Snake River dams and Puget Sound orcas

NOAA Fisheries recently released a [fact sheet](#) on the relationship between the Snake River dams and the Southern Resident Killer Whales in Puget Sound. Advocates of dam breaching have recently tried to link the Puget Sound orcas with just the salmon from the Snake River. They allege the dams threaten orca populations by limiting the number of salmon they can consume in the oceans.

NOAA's fact sheet is an overview of research on these orca pods, where they spend time on the West Coast, and what they consume. NOAA has repeatedly found that breaching the dams would have a negligible impact on whale populations. The research further shows that salmon abundance is what is most important to orca populations, and that orcas do not discern between wild and hatchery fish. NOAA concludes that breaching the Snake River dams would "bring only marginal change in the total salmon available to the killer whales, and that long-term recovery of West Coast salmon and their habitat collectively, including in Puget Sound, will likely be an important contributor to recovery of the whales." Visit [NOAA's website](#) to [check out the fact](#)

[sheet](#) and learn more about these pods, their steep decline due to their capture for display in aquariums the 1960's and early 1970's, and [efforts to help the pods recover](#) since then.

Court sets schedule for new FCRPS BiOp and NEPA analysis

On May 4th, Judge Michael Simon of the United States District Court issued his [ruling](#) on the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) Biological Opinion (BiOp) lawsuit. While Judge Simon left the current BiOp in place, he found that the federal agencies must produce an updated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and deliver a new Biological Opinion.

Since the Judge's ruling in early May, the federal agencies filed their [proposed timeline](#) for delivering these products, the plaintiffs filed their response, and intervener groups filed briefs weighing in on the subject of timing. A subset of PNWA's membership comprises the Inland Ports & Navigation Group (IPNG), which holds intervener status in this case. Click [here](#) to read the IPNG brief to the Court, supporting the federal request for adequate time to complete the significant new analysis.

Yesterday, Judge Simon released his [order](#) setting the remand schedule. Judge Simon agreed with the federal agencies' request for five years to produce the updated NEPA analysis. Following is the schedule that has been set:

- The Federal Defendants shall complete scoping under NEPA on or before September 30, 2017
- The Federal Defendants shall file a status report with the Court on or before October 30, 2017
- A status conference is set for November 30, 2017, at 10AM
- NOAA Fisheries' further consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, correcting the deficiencies identified in the Court's Opinion and Order of May 4, 2016, shall be completed on or before December 31, 2018
- The draft EIS shall be completed on or before March 27, 2020
- The final EIS shall be completed on or before March 26, 2021
- The Records of Decision shall be issued on or before September 24, 2021

The Judge's May 4th ruling required the federal agencies to analyze and evaluate all options when performing the updated environmental assessment and producing a new EIS and BiOp. The membership of PNWA looks forward to participating in all available public portions of the process that will unfold over the next five years. This will be an important time, as the federal agencies work hard to capture potential impacts to system users from any potential changes to river operations. For more information, contact [Kristin Meira](#).

Jessie's Ilwaco Fish Company joins PNWA!

[Jessie's Ilwaco Fish Co.](http://www.ilwacofish.com) is a primary processor of fresh and frozen seafood located at the mouth of the Columbia River in Ilwaco, WA. They have over 100 employees, and process crab, shrimp, salmon, bottom fish, sardines, albacore tuna and whiting. Jessie's has recently added a shrimp processing plant in South Bend, WA with an additional 50+ employees. For more information, visit www.ilwacofish.com. Jessie's Ilwaco Fish Company will be represented by Donald Alber, he can be reached by email at Don@Alberseafoods.com.



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