



# Nor'wester Newsletter

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## Federal agencies extend CRSO NEPA scoping meeting comment period to Feb. 7

The federal agencies have extended the public comment period for the CRSO NEPA scoping process by three weeks. The new deadline for comments to be submitted is February 7th. PNWA is drafting a letter for use by our members. PNWA members can e-mail [Kristin Meira](mailto:kristin.meira@pnwa.org) for more information.

There are a variety of options for submitting your comments to the federal agencies. For more information on submitting your comments, visit the CRSO [website](#).

## Walden, DeFazio selected for committee leadership roles

Representative Greg Walden (R-OR) has been selected to lead the House Energy and Commerce Committee. This committee is responsible for oversight of U.S. energy and trade policies and includes the subcommittees of Energy and Power as well as Environment and the Economy. Both subcommittees deal with policy issues of great importance to PNWA members, including national energy policy, trade, and interstate and foreign commerce. In a statement, Representative Walden stated that the committee "will focus on what's best for consumers, on creating better paying jobs and providing patient-centered health care."

Additionally, Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR) will continue to serve as Ranking Member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. Representative DeFazio has been a key partner and well-respected leader on all transportation issues. He has

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also successfully worked to ensure the Northwest perspective is well-represented in Committee discussions. DeFazio championed important Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund reforms in the Water Resources Development Acts (WRDA) of 2014 and 2016, as well as important funding measures in the 2015 FAST ACT surface transportation package.

PNWA congratulates Rep. Walden and Rep. DeFazio on these important committee posts, and we look forward to working with them on national energy, environment, transportation, and navigation policies during this Congress.

## PNWA Member Spotlight: Port of Hood River applies for grant to study replacing the Hood River bridge

The Port of Hood River has applied for a federal FASTLANE grant to support the completion of pre-construction activities associated with the replacement of the Port-owned Hood River/White Salmon Interstate Bridge. The current bridge's 256' navigation channel span is too narrow and is a major hazard to navigation due to high cross winds and current. Originally constructed in 1924, the bridge is seismically vulnerable and at risk of catastrophic failure from an earthquake. It is weight limited and therefore unable to accommodate larger trucks. As the Port continues to fund repairs and capital improvements necessary to keep the current bridge safe and operational, those costs escalate as it reaches the end of its useful life.

The Columbia River trade corridor is the lifeblood of our regional economy, supporting 46 million tons of foreign trade at a value of over \$20 billion annually. Over 9 million tons of commercial cargo traveled under the Bridge's lift span in 2012. Construction of a new, replacement interstate bridge is a critical infrastructure priority in the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area. Federal funds, combined with local resources, would ensure that permitting and engineering tasks are executed efficiently and a safe and modern replacement for this important link in our regional economy is constructed soon.

## Columbia Basin Partnership officially forms

NOAA's Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee has officially formed the Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force. The Task Force will be charged with developing recommendations for the long term management and restoration of Northwest salmon and fish populations. The group includes twenty individuals from industry and interest groups throughout the region, who will be joined by state and tribal representatives. A [full list of Task Force members](#) is available on NOAA's website, along with additional details and background.

PNWA Executive Director Kristin Meira, Port of Cascade Locks Commissioner Jess Groves and Port of Portland Marine Environmental Director Marla Harrison are among the individuals selected to join the Task Force. The first meeting is set for late January. PNWA will keep its membership informed as this important effort moves forward.

**Pacific Northwest Waterways Association**  
516 SE Morrison Street | Suite 1000 | Portland, OR 97214  
Telephone: 503-234-8551 | Fax: 503-234-8555  
[www.pnwa.net](http://www.pnwa.net)

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Pacific Northwest Waterways Association, 516 SE Morrison Street,  
Suite 1000, Portland, OR 97214

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Sent by [peter.godlewski@pnwa.net](mailto:peter.godlewski@pnwa.net) in collaboration with

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