



Nor'wester newsletter

Issue #849 | April 05, 2023

[PNWA Website](#)

[About PNWA](#)

[Action Agenda](#)

[PNWA Events](#)

[Contact Us](#)

In This Issue

- Jennifer Quan Named NMFS New West Coast Regional Administrator
- MARAD PIDP Roundtable with PNWA Members
- Marine Transportation Resilience Assessment Guide Released
- Tidewater Awarded \$3.1 Million for Renewable Fuels Hub
- Northwest Energy Security Act Introduced
- Northwest Agriculture Interests Urge USDA Secretary to Engage on Lower Snake River Dams
- Northwest Delegation Sends Letter on Columbia River Treaty to President Biden
- Corps Releases Guidance on Definition of Economically Disadvantaged Communities

Jennifer Quan Named NOAA Fisheries' New West Coast Regional Administrator



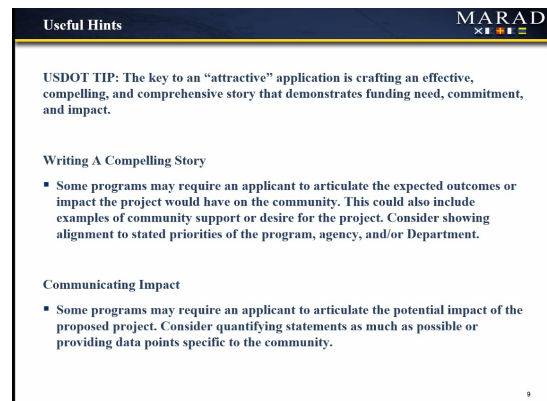
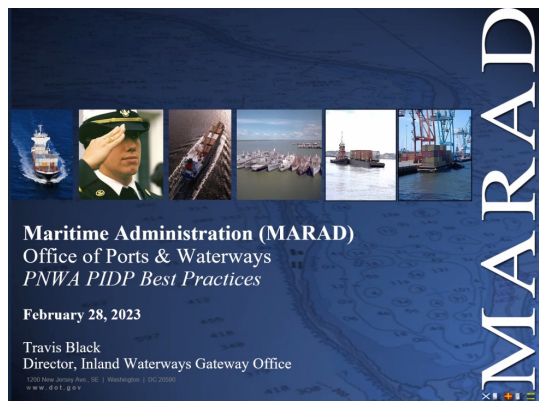
On Tuesday this week, NOAA Fisheries announced that Jennifer Quan would be the Regional Administrator for the West Coast Region, officially assuming the role on April 23, 2023.

Jennifer has worked in this field for more than 27 years. During that time, she assisted in developing federal legislation and policy on climate, weather, and marine natural resources for the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, Subcommittee on Oceans, Fisheries, and Climate. She also served as a supervisory fish biologist for more than 4 years at NOAA Fisheries, managing the conservation and protection of marine resources in the Puget Sound, Washington Coast, and Lower Columbia River. Before her role at NOAA, she was the Government Affairs Director

for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife for over 10 years.

PNWA congratulates Jennifer and wishes her the best in her new role. We look forward to continuing our work with NOAA Fisheries under her leadership.

MARAD PIDP Roundtable with PNWA Members



In late February, PNWA hosted a Maritime Administration (MARAD) webinar focusing on Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) best practices, including information on submitting successful grant applications. The PIDP Notice of Funding Opportunity ([NOFO](#)) was issued earlier this year, and submissions are due by April 28, 2023. A recording of the webinar is available for a limited time [here](#) (Passcode: *F=mHL37), and additional MARAD webinars can be found on [their website](#).

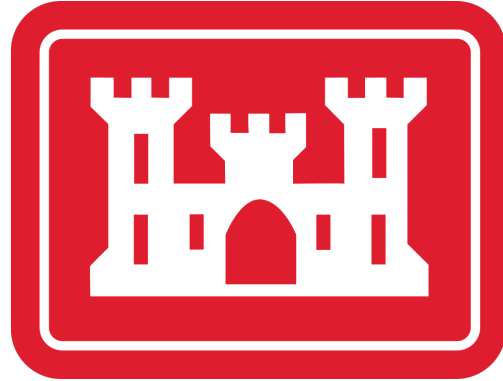
There are a number of key takeaways from the discussion that we would like to highlight for our members:

- MARAD includes fish within their definition of freight, therefore commercial fishing docks/piers are eligible for the PIDP.
- Channel deepening for the purpose of enhancing/increasing the movement of goods is eligible for PIDP funding, but maintenance dredging is not an eligible action.
- MARAD is aware of the permitting challenges in our region and encourages applying for a grant when entities are one to three years out from needing the funding in place.
- PIDP applicants must implement the provisions of the [Buy America Act](#), which currently has a public comment period open [here](#).
- A list of FY22 PIDP projects can be found [here](#).
- Additional US DOT information can be found on the [DOT Navigator](#).
- Additional maritime funding opportunities can be found in the [CMTS Federal Funding Handbook](#).

The presentation slides provided by Travis Black can be accessed [here](#).

If you have questions, you can reach out to our regional MARAD representatives [Catherine Simons](#) or [Travis Black](#), or contact the PIDP program staff directly at pidpgrants@dot.gov.

CISA & USACE Release Marine Transportation Resilience Assessment Guide



The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Engineer Research and Development Center (USACE-ERDC) have jointly released a [Marine Transportation System Resilience Assessment Guide](#) (MTS Guide). This guide is intended for use by federal agencies, local governments, and industry decision-makers who manage risk and enhance resilience to critical infrastructure systems and functions.

The MTS Guide provides a consistent, repeatable process for conducting uniform assessments of the resilience of the complicated systems that comprise the MTS. It offers advice for assembling the diverse group of public and private stakeholders and agencies that manage these systems, provides a framework for conducting resilience assessments, and offers a variety of resources to support resilience assessments. It is also meant to facilitate closer relationships between stakeholders and partners who may not traditionally be involved in port resiliency assessments.

For more information or assistance with using the MTS Guide, please use the link above or contact jevon.daniel@cisa.dhs.gov or katherine.f.chambers@usace.army.mil.

Tidewater Awarded \$3.1 Million for Renewable Fuels Distribution Hub



TIDEWATER

PNWA congratulates Tidewater Terminal Company, Inc. on their \$3,072,696 grant award from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to expand the availability of biodiesel in central and eastern Washington and Oregon as northern Idaho.

The grant, combined with over \$3 million in matching funds from Tidewater, will enable improvements at their Snake River Terminal (SRT) in Pasco, Washington,

allowing for the receiving of neat biodiesel by railcar and its blending and offloading to trucks for local delivery. Tidewater's application was supported by the Pacific Northwest congressional delegation. The project is expected to reduce annual emissions by 212 million pounds of CO₂ and support Washington and Oregon's emissions reduction goals by meeting a projected 150% increase in biodiesel demand. Biodiesel, made from a range of feedstocks, including soybean oil, animal fats, and used cooking oil, can reduce net carbon emissions by as much as 78% compared to petroleum-based fuels.

For more information about this award, please click [here](#).

Northwest Energy Security Act Introduced



On March 23rd, U.S. Representatives Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R, WA-5) and Dan Newhouse (R, WA-4) introduced the [Northwest Energy Security Act](#) to protect the four Lower Snake River dams and boost energy production along the entire Columbia River System. U.S. Senators Jim Risch (R-ID) and Steve Daines (R-MT) have also introduced the legislation as a companion bill in the Senate.

Under the legislation, the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) will be required to operate in alignment with the 2020 “Columbia River System Operations Environmental Impact Statement (CRSO EIS) Record of Decision”. This decision was based on the best available science and followed public process requirements outlined in federal law. It aims to protect the power and navigation benefits of the Lower Snake River dams while supporting endangered salmon recovery through operational modifications.

The Northwest Energy Security Act has received endorsements from several organizations, including the Washington Policy Center, Inland Ports and Navigation Group (IPNG), Tri-Cities Development Council (TRIDEC), United Power Trades Organization, Washington Grain Commission, WA Wheat Growers, and Idaho Farm Bureau.

Click [here](#) to view the joint press release from Representatives McMorris Rodgers and Newhouse.

Northwest Agriculture Interests Urge USDA Secretary to Engage on the Lower Snake River Dams

Last week, a coalition of Pacific Northwest agricultural stakeholders sent a [letter](#) to U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Thomas Vilsack highlighting concerns with the federal government's exploration of Lower Snake River dam breaching. The letter notes the value of agriculture to our region and nation, and the importance of looking at this issue as it relates to the broader policy objectives of the Biden Administration. While salmon recovery is an extremely important issue in the Pacific Northwest, the letter notes that any action of this magnitude needs to be looked at through multiple lenses, including impacts to global food security, clean energy, de-carbonization of the transportation sector, national security, environmental justice, and international trade.

PNWA's [Inland Ports & Navigation Group \(IPNG\)](#) remains very active on this issue as it relates to the Columbia River System Operations (CRSO) mediation which will continue through August 31, 2023. For more information, please view our [fact sheet](#) or contact [Heather Stebbings](#).

Northwest Delegation Sends Letter on the Columbia River Treaty to President Biden

On March 22nd, the entire Pacific Northwest Congressional delegation sent a [letter](#) to President Biden urging him to make modernization of the Columbia River Treaty a key topic during a recent trip to Canada and a top agenda item in any bilateral discussions with Canadian leadership.

The letter laid out the river system's significant importance in our region's economic and cultural vitality, and noted the need to conclude Treaty negotiations in the next several months to avoid significant uncertainty and widespread impacts to the region. Without an agreement, the U.S. could see increased flood risks, unpredictable river flows, and impacts to safe and efficient navigation along the Columbia River trade gateway. PNWA continues to monitor the negotiations closely, and will update our membership as things progress. For more information on PNWA's perspective, view our [Columbia River Treaty](#) fact sheet.

March 28, 2023

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

We write to you today on behalf of wheat farmers and agricultural producers to voice our concerns with the current state of the mediation regarding the Federal Columbia River Power System, which includes irrigation activity and barge transport through the dams on the Columbia Snake River System (CSRS). As you may be aware, the decades-long litigation regarding Pacific Northwest salmon in the Columbia River Basin is currently under a stay agreement until August 31, 2023. During the stay, the primary parties to the litigation entered a mediation process led by the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and the Federal Mediation & Conciliation Service (FMCS) in the hopes of reaching a settlement. Many of us are members of an organization that has served as a defendant intervenor since the beginning of this litigation nearly 30 years ago, and we have been active participants in the case on the side of the United States Government (USG).

As part of the stay agreement, the federal government committed to "exploring" removal of the four Lower Snake River dams (LSRD). Prior to the last several months, the USG has never supported a position of dam breaching; however, we are increasingly concerned that the USG position is shifting to support a dam breaching action that would completely devastate the Pacific Northwest agricultural community. Dam breaching would eliminate irrigation from the pool behind Ice Harbor Dam and would remove barge access for our farmers, requiring them to turn to either rail or truck to move their product. As you well know, neither form of transportation is as safe, efficient, or environmentally friendly as barge navigation.

During the last several years the U.S. rail system has faced significant congestion and supply chain bottlenecks. The Columbia Snake River System moves more than 60 percent of the nation's wheat, as well as a large amount of corn, soybeans, lumber products, and crop inputs – with harvested crops coming to the Pacific Northwest from as far as the Midwest via rail. Eliminating barging as an option for our Northwest goods would increase demand on limited Class 1 railroad capacity and exacerbate an already tenuous supply-chain balance across all cargo classes. This means further unpredictability for intermodal cargo, energy products, and agricultural movements. Additionally, the logistics of expanding rail access is not feasible in our Snake and Columbia River corridors due to the geographical landscape, cultural and historic land importance, and strict regulatory processes.

It is important to note that barging also provides an important competitive check on the rail system. Losing barge access would give railroads the power to raise rates further, which will affect the long-term competitiveness of U.S. wheat exports moving to global markets. As we saw in the April 2021 U.S. International Trade Commission report on, "The Effects of Rail Prices on U.S. Agricultural Exports" higher rail transportation costs are often transferred to the producer, reducing the incomes and profit margins of producers and negatively affecting the competitiveness of U.S. grain exports. The report estimates that rail transportation may account for more than 40 percent of the price of wheat.

March 22, 2023

President Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to urge you to make the modernization of the Columbia River Treaty a key goal of your upcoming trip to Canada and a top agenda item in any bilateral discussions with Canadian leadership. For the last six decades, the Columbia River Treaty has provided a framework for international cooperation which has helped deliver irreplaceable energy, irrigation, and fish habitat benefits to the citizens of the Pacific Northwest. Now, after years of negotiations, Presidential level leadership is required to modernize the Treaty and restore the balance and certainty necessary to support the economies of Washington, Idaho, Oregon and Montana and meet the evolving needs of our region.

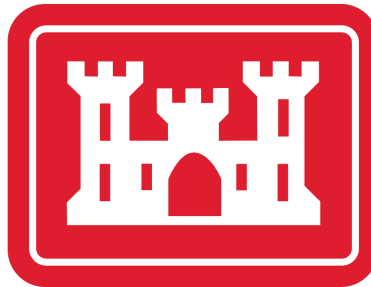
The Columbia River Basin is one of the greatest natural resources in the western United States, providing immeasurable economic and cultural benefits to the United States, Canada and Indigenous communities. The carbon-free hydropower generated in the Columbia River Basin delivers affordable clean power to over 60 percent of Pacific Northwest homes and businesses, accounts for 90 percent of renewable energy in the region, and increases the reliability and resiliency of the grid throughout the western United States. The Basin facilitates the movement of over \$20 billion in goods from around the country to lucrative and growing international markets. Over 60 percent of wheat produced in the United States travels through the Columbia River Basin. The Basin is critical habitat for a number of fish species, including 12 populations of Endangered Species Act protected salmon and steelhead.

Recognizing the need to strengthen the Columbia River Treaty, the United States and Canadian negotiating teams have held 15 negotiating sessions from 2018 through February 2023. While there has been some progress, the United States and Canada are entering a critical period and need to conclude Treaty negotiations to avoid significant and widespread impacts to the region. Without an agreement, both countries will have to prepare for unwelcome volatility and strains on Columbia River Basin operations, including increased flood risks and economic uncertainty in the United States.

It is important to know that our nations were spurred to enter into the Treaty in the first place, in large part, because of disastrous flooding in the Columbia River Basin in 1948. At the time, the U.S. Geological Survey estimated the cost of the damage at \$102.7 million – nearly \$1.3 billion today. Moreover, the entire Basin is home to more people and businesses now than it was then.

Your visit to Canada provides a rare opportunity to push for the conclusion of Treaty negotiations and a modernization of the Columbia River Treaty. We respectfully request that you prioritize the Columbia River Treaty negotiations in your engagements with the Canadian

Corps Releases Guidance on Definition of Economically Disadvantaged Communities



On March 14th, Mr. Michael Connor, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, released a [memo defining economically disadvantaged communities](#). This sets the stage for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to move forward with related provisions in the Water Resources Development Act of 2020 (WRDA 2020) and WRDA 2022, including pilot programs for Corps projects in rural and economically disadvantaged communities and specific continuing authority programs.

According to Connor's memo, the definition of an economically disadvantaged community applies to all WRDA provisions authorized in and after WRDA 2020. An economically disadvantaged community is defined as meeting one or more of the following criteria: low per capita income, an unemployment rate above the national average, located in Indian country or the proximity of an Alaska Native Village, U.S. Territories, or identified as disadvantaged by the Council on Environmental Quality's [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#). For more information, view the [memo directly](#) or contact gib.a.owen.civ@army.mil or 703-695-4641.

