



Nor'wester newsletter

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[PNWA July DC Advocacy Trip Dates Announced!](#)



PNWA is thrilled to announce the dates for our upcoming advocacy trip to Washington, DC, which will take place from Tuesday, July 25th to Thursday, July 27th. We're excited to connect with our congressional delegation, committee staff, and federal agency partners to advocate for our members' priorities.

We'll be sharing more information soon, including details on hotel accommodations and the schedule of events for the trip. Space is limited, so if you're interested in joining us or would like more information, please reach out to [Dena Horton](#) or [Anthony Peña](#). We look forward to seeing you there!

[Corps Releases FY2024 Spend Plan](#)



On March 9, President Biden released his FY2024 budget. PNWA previously [reported](#) on PNWA projects included. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) recently released the FY2024 spend plan for the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act ([IIJA](#)). The [Construction](#) account did not include any projects in the Pacific Northwest. However, the Operations & Maintenance ([O & M](#)) account funding included the following PNWA project priorities as well as recreation projects for the Corps:

- \$300,000 - Bonneville Lock & Dam to update fish passage and environmental stewardship exhibits at Bradford Island Visitor Center
- \$2,500,000 - McNary Lock & Dam to rehabilitate McNary Levee Drainage pump stations
- \$13,622,000 - Ice Harbor Lock & Dam for septic system utility upgrades at Charbonneau Park, replace navigation lock tainter valve system for #1 through #4, and repairs to the navigation lock downstream coffer cell #4

Following the release of the President's FY2024 budget, PNWA staff coordinated with the Portland, Walla Walla, and Portland Districts of the Corps to understand the outstanding capabilities the Corps could execute or obligate for our projects if additional funding could be secured. We will post the 2024 PNWA Supported Corps Projects list as soon as updates have been finalized.

Members of Congress Question CEQ and NOAA Regarding Efforts Related to Snake River Dam Breaching

This past week, members of the Pacific Northwest congressional delegation took meaningful steps to hold the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) accountable for activities related to Snake River dam breaching.

On Monday, May 1, the House Natural Resources Committee [launched an official Congressional oversight investigation](#) into NOAA-NMFS regarding their recent reversal on supporting continued operations of the dams on the Lower Snake River. [In a letter sent to NOAA Administrator Richard Spinrad](#), Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries Chairman Cliff Bentz (R, OR-2) and Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations Chairman Paul Gosar (R, AZ-9) questioned the agency's policy shift despite the 'uncertainty' on whether breaching would provide any 'direct productivity and survival benefits' for salmon and steelhead stocks. This investigation specifically questions development of the September 2022 NMFS document titled "[Rebuilding Interior Columbia Basin Salmon and Steelhead](#)" which recommends Snake River dam breaching as an immediate near-term action needed to recover the species. This document was drafted with significant input from the State of Oregon and Nez Perce Tribe, two plaintiffs in the ongoing Columbia River System Operations (CRSO)

litigation/mediation. The letter requests feedback from NOAA-NMFS by May 17th.

On Wednesday, May 3rd, Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R, WA-05), Rep. Dan Newhouse (R, WA-04), and Sen. Jim Risch (R-ID) [wrote to the White House Council on Environmental Quality \(CEQ\)](#) asking for answers regarding the Biden administration's approach to public engagement during this confidential mediation. In the letter, they requested information on the purpose and management of the salmon@ceq.eop.gov inbox, the number and substance of the comments received, and how the interagency group weighs them in decisions regarding the CRSO. This is part of an ongoing effort by these lawmakers to ensure that all stakeholders using the Columbia-Snake River System have a voice in conversations about its future.

Federal Highway Administration: \$160 Million in Grants to Reduce Truck Emissions



The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is accepting applications for its "Reduction of Truck Emissions at Port Facilities Grant Program," (RTEPF) which aims to fund projects that reduce port-related emissions from idling trucks, including the advancement of port electrification and improvements in port operations efficiency. This new discretionary grants program has up to \$160 million available for distribution, representing the combined amounts authorized for this program for fiscal years 2022 and 2023. The actual amount available to be awarded under this notice will be subject to the availability of funds.

Eligible project locations for deployment projects using RTEPF Grant Program funds include areas within or adjacent to ports and intermodal port transfer facilities. Testing and evaluation projects can be conducted anywhere but must be focused on reducing truck emissions within or adjacent to ports and/or intermodal port transfer facilities.

This grant program is an excellent opportunity to receive funding to reduce emissions and improve efficiency at ports and intermodal transfer facilities. This funding can be used for a range of activities, such as the advancement of port electrification, improving port operations efficiency, and testing and evaluation projects aimed at reducing truck emissions.

Applications are due June 26, 2023. FHWA expects to announce awardees in November 2023. Read FHWA's press release [here](#) and the full NOFO [here](#).

U.S. Senators from Oregon Send Letter to FEMA Regarding Changes to NFIP in Oregon

In response to a draft plan proposing changes to the National Flood Insurance Program, U.S. Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley of Oregon [have requested](#) that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provide technical assistance to local communities in the state. The senators have also asked for a 30-day extension of the public comment period for the plan's environmental impact statement. FEMA's proposed updates were prompted by a 2009 lawsuit by the Audubon Society alleging that the program violated the National Environmental Policy Act by causing harm to Coho salmon in Oregon. The National Marine Fisheries Service confirmed this claim in a 2016 Biological Opinion. As FEMA works to bring the program into compliance with federal laws on endangered species, communities across Oregon have expressed significant concerns about the changes and FEMA's stakeholder engagement process, as these changes would affect over 260 communities in the state.

PNWA has [submitted comments on the draft plan](#) expressing the concerns of its Oregon members and the potentially significant impact of any development on the updated 100-year flood plain.

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