

# PNWA - INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES



Ports and navigation stakeholders in the Northwest applaud the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021. A \$1.2 trillion investment in transportation, aviation, rail, water, energy, and broadband goes a long way to modernizing U.S. ports and ensuring our nation remains a global leader in reliable, safe and efficient goods movement. The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 also provided \$3 billion investment in electrification, grid technology, equipment, vehicles, and planning efforts to reduce air pollution at ports.

## Beyond Dredging - Additional PNWA Priorities

As Congress works to build on improvements made in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act and other pieces of infrastructure legislation, consider implementation actions to:

Establish a specific freight element in any new transportation initiative. PNWA advocates for freight funding programs that are truly multimodal.

Continue to increase funding for infrastructure programs. BUILD, INFRA, RRIF, PIDP, Marine Highways and other programs have been critical to facilitating port, rail, and highway improvements, and we encourage Congress to enhance or expand them. The Maritime Transportation System Emergency Relief Act (MTSERA) was created in late 2020 in response to the pandemic. The program is intended to provide aid to the maritime industry in emergencies the way the FAA provides emergency aid to the aviation industry. Some ports, particularly those in rural communities, continue to struggle with rebuilding budgets that suffered during the pandemic with revenue losses from multiple sources and increased costs for sanitation, safety equipment, and other costs. The \$3.5 billion for the MTSERA program has yet to be funded.

Increase the passenger facility charge (PFC). Increasing the PFC will help offset the cost of building and modernizing airport infrastructure, and support improvements to aviation facilities, technology and equipment. This will allow airports to better meet current air traffic demands and prepare for the future needs of the nation's aviation transportation network.



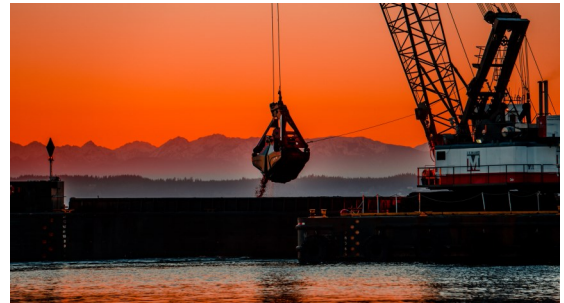
*Coos Bay Rail Line*

Continue broadband investments. Investments in publicly-owned open access fiber networks are essential to addressing the near- and long-term broadband needs of Pacific Northwest communities. The infrastructure package provided significant funding for broadband but it does not cover all the existing and future needs. Current federal policies are very restrictive in terms of the types of projects that can be funded and the communities that can be served. These policies should be revisited to ensure that future federal investments are as impactful as possible.

Include resiliency efforts in infrastructure planning. Investing in resilient port infrastructure should be a priority as Congress considers both current operations and the ability of our ports and harbors to withstand natural or manmade disasters, increasing storm surge, and changes in sea level over time. In the Northwest, for example, the possibility of a 9.0 Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and associated tsunami along the Washington and Oregon coasts drives resiliency planning. Around the nation, ports are on the front lines of search and rescue operations, recovery efforts, and the ability to bring in medical and rebuilding equipment. It is important for port infrastructure to be ready when disaster strikes rather than seek relief after a catastrophic event.

Address regulatory system challenges. A range of issues including a significant lack of staffing capacity to process permits in a timely fashion, inconsistent implementation of policies and law, and disagreements between regulatory agencies, can lead to project cost increases, critical delays, deferred maintenance, and decreased competitiveness. Stronger oversight is needed to ensure that regulatory agencies follow the Administrative Procedure Act and other laws regarding the process to make significant regulatory changes and implement rules and guidance appropriately and consistently across the country.

Increase funding for tourism and non-freight port related opportunities. Ports often provide many other services besides freight movement creating valuable and diverse employment opportunities, particularly in rural communities. Ports often serve as business incubators, cruise destinations, recreational boating and fishing launches, commercial office parks, farmers and artisan markets, waterfront retail and residential property management, and more. However, there are limited Federal funding opportunities for ports to grow non-freight related businesses, particularly in rural communities.



*Clamshell work at Everett Harbor, WA*