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Mission to Washington *** UPDATE ***

Due to the recent release of the 2026 congressional calendar, we learned that the week originally selected for PNWA's Mission to Washington, DC is one in which neither the House of Representatives nor the Senate will be in session. Because meaningful engagement with our congressional delegation is central to the value of this trip, we must adjust the event dates.

PNWA sincerely apologizes for any inconvenience this change may cause. We understand that many of you plan your travel far in advance, and we want to emphasize that this decision was not made lightly. The need to shift dates arose entirely from circumstances outside our control.

Once the conflict became clear, we worked quickly to identify a new week that could accommodate our group, balancing hotel availability, room block requirements, and Oregon and Washington Spring Break schedules, while ensuring Congress will be in session.

We are truly sorry for any disruption to your plans. Our priority is to provide a mission that is worth your time, resources, and participation, and holding the event when lawmakers are unavailable would not meet that standard.

Thank you for your flexibility and continued commitment to PNWA's advocacy work. **Registration is open!**

Click here for Details

PNWA is Hiring

We are pleased to announce that the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association (PNWA) is hiring a Government Relations Manager to join our team! PNWA is a non-partisan, non-profit, industry trade association addressing navigation, trade, energy, and environmental issues in the Northwest. With a strong, supportive membership and over 90 years of history, PNWA is a truly unique and constantly evolving group that engages on infrastructure and policy issues in our region for over 150 member organizations.

Click here to Apply

Maunu Attends WorkBoat as a Featured Speaker

PNWA Executive Director Neil Maunu joined industry leaders at the 2025 International WorkBoat Show in New Orleans, where he served as a featured speaker on the panel *"America's Inland Waterways: Progress, Delays, and What's Ahead Under a New Administration."*

The International WorkBoat Show has been a cornerstone of the commercial marine industry for more than forty years, bringing together thousands of maritime professionals to exchange ideas, explore emerging technologies, and strengthen partnerships that shape the future of the sector.

During the session, panelists discussed key infrastructure investments across the nation, including major modernization efforts on the Ohio River system. Representing the Pacific Northwest, Maunu highlighted the importance of the Columbia Snake River System, a 465-mile, eight-lock federal navigation channel that moves 50 million tons of cargo each year. PNWA was proud to participate in this year's event, which continues to set the standard for innovation, collaboration, and industry leadership.

Read Article

PNWA Attends the 2nd Annual Marine Highway 5 Roundtable

PNWA participated in the 2nd Annual Marine Highway 5 (MH5) Roundtable on November 18 in Tacoma, joining tug operators, barge companies, and short sea shipping professionals for a day of focused discussions and industry updates. The

event provided valuable insight into developments along the MH5 corridor and opportunities to strengthen marine transportation in the region. PNWA appreciates the collaboration and remains committed to supporting initiatives that enhance maritime mobility across the Pacific Northwest.

The roundtable offered valuable insight into trends and challenges along the MH5 corridor, as well as opportunities to expand marine transportation as a reliable and efficient freight option. PNWA appreciated the chance to connect with members, operators, and partners and to hear directly from those working on the front lines of regional marine shipping. The strong turnout highlighted growing interest in strengthening shipping on the West Coast.

PNWA attends WPPA Annual Meeting

PNWA was pleased to attend the 2025 Washington Public Ports Association (WPPA) Annual Meeting in Tacoma from November 19–21. The event brought together port leaders, commissioners, attorneys, and industry partners from across the state to discuss key issues shaping Washington's port system.

We appreciated the opportunity to meet with many PNWA members and associate members. These conversations offered valuable insight into regional trends affecting ports, including trade patterns, infrastructure needs, permitting challenges, and workforce considerations; perspectives that directly inform our federal advocacy work. The program featured engaging speakers and timely discussions focused on statewide priorities, collaboration, and long-term planning. The meeting underscored the importance of continued partnership between PNWA, WPPA, and the broader maritime community.

Thank you to WPPA for hosting a productive and informative event. PNWA looks forward to continued collaboration in support of resilient infrastructure and a strong regional economy.

PNWA Participates in the Idaho–Oregon Grain and Oilseed Convention

PNWA was honored to participate in the Idaho–Oregon Grain and Oilseed Convention, held November 18–20 in Sun Valley, Idaho. This annual gathering brings together growers, agricultural leaders, and industry partners to share strategies, strengthen the community, and highlight the resilience of the region's agricultural economy. With this year's theme, "Growing in Spite of Adversity," the convention focused on how producers and stakeholders continue to adapt, innovate, and lead despite ongoing challenges.

The program featured a strong lineup of speakers, including keynote presenter Dr. Matt Roberts, who delivered insights on navigating volatility in his address, "Surviving and Thriving in an Ever More Volatile World." PNWA was pleased to contribute to the conversation with our presentation, "Here We Go Again: The Threat to the Lower Snake River Dams," delivered on Wednesday.

Throughout the conference, it was wonderful to connect with many PNWA members and associate members, including leaders from the Idaho Grain Producers Association, Idaho Wheat Commission, and Oregon Wheat Growers League. These partnerships remain essential to strengthening regional collaboration and ensuring a unified voice on issues that matter to Northwest growers and exporters.

PNWA presents at Wheat Marketing Center

PNWA's Dena Horton presented to Washington wheat growers as part of the Wheat Marketing Center tour during their stop at Shaver Transportation underscoring why a healthy, reliable Columbia–Snake system is essential to U.S. wheat export competitiveness. This year's Washington Grain Commission Portland Grower Tour gave growers a firsthand look at the full supply chain,

following their crop beyond the farm down the Columbia–Snake River system, through export facilities, and into global markets.

New ESA Rules Published for Comment

On November 24, PNWA issued a Government Relations Notice to our membership highlighting publication of revised Endangered Species Act (ESA) rules in the Federal Register. The deadline to provide comments is December 22, 2025. If your organization submits comments, please copy Dena Horton.

Recently published ESA rule revisions include changes to:

- ESA 7 Interagency Cooperation
- ESA 4 Listing Endangered and Threatened Species and Designating Critical Habitat
- ESA 4(b)(2) Critical Habitat
- ESA 4(d) Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants

As you may know, PNWA advocated for changes, particularly to the 2024 Interagency Cooperation rulemaking which changed the environmental baseline and instituted mitigation requirements/conservation offsets for maintenance of existing structures. Both of these changes stem from the 2022 NOAA and Corps Memorandum of Resolution which PNWA has vigorously opposed. Both the Memorandum and 2024 Interagency Rule have led to project permit delays, higher costs, and several lawsuits for which PNWA contributed amicus briefs. PNWA signed a joint letter requesting recission of the Memorandum too.

According to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Interagency Cooperation rule, "The services jointly propose to return to the 2019 consultation framework by reinstating definitions of 'effects of the action' and 'environmental baseline,' removing the 2024 'offset' provisions and restoring section 7 procedures consistent with the statutory text. These changes respond directly to the Supreme Court's decision in Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo, which overturned the Chevron deference standard and reaffirmed that agencies must adhere strictly to the law as written." PNWA is very pleased to see the changes put forward in the new Interagency Cooperation revised rule. To read the USFWS revisions to the Interagency Cooperation rule, click here.

PNWA member Van Ness Feldman has provided some legal analysis of the changes too. To read the VNF Alert, click here.

PNWA signed a joint letter requesting rescission of the Memorandum, click here.

New WOTUS Rule Published

To fully comply with and implement the 2023 U.S. Supreme Court's Sackett v. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) decision, on November 17, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and the EPA announced a proposed rule to clarify the definition of waters of the United States (WOTUS). The proposed rule was formally published in the Federal Register on November 20th. Public comments will be accepted on or before January 5, 2026. To submit comments through the online portal, click here.

- To read the proposed rule, click here.
- To read the press release, click here.
- To read the fact sheet, click here.

The law firm Schwabe recently posted analysis of the proposed WOTUS rule to highlight key changes and the new definitions of jurisdictional waters as well as specific exclusions from Clean Water Act (CWA) jurisdiction. Of note, is that CWA Section 404 permits needed for discharge of dredged and fill material are anticipated to decrease as wetlands and ephemeral streams that were previously considered jurisdictional no longer meet the definition standard.

- To read Schwabe's analysis, click here.

FY 2026 BUILD NOFO

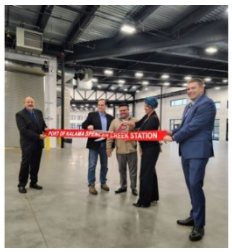
The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Pub. L. 117-58, November 15, 2021, IIJA) authorized and appropriated $1.5 billion to be awarded by the Department of Transportation ("DOT") for FY 2026 for Local and Regional Project Assistance Program Grants under National Infrastructure Investments.

The program is codified at 49 U.S.C. 6702. IIJA requires the DOT to publish a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) no later than 60 days after enactment, which is November 30, 2025. In order to comply with this requirement, this (NOFO) solicits applications for projects to be funded under the Local and Regional Project Assistance Program, known as the BUILD Grants program. The current Notice of Funding Opportunity is attached. However, the Department intends to amend this NOFO to provide more details on application requirements.

Program Overview:

- BUILD grants will be awarded on a competitive basis, per statute, for planning or constructing surface transportation infrastructure projects that will improve safety; environmental sustainability; quality of life; mobility and community connectivity; economic competitiveness and opportunity including tourism; state of good repair; partnership and collaboration; and innovation. Funding $1.5 billion in FY 2026 IIJA funds Minimum
- Award Size • $1 million for rural capital projects • $5 million for urban capital projects • Planning projects do not have a minimum award size Maximum Award Size $25 million.
- Applications must be submitted online no later than 5:00 pm eastern on February 24, 2026. Complete instructions on how to apply will be posted at grants.gov and the BUILD program website Selections are expected to be announced no later than June 28, 2026.
- Prior Awards – For FY 2025 BUILD Round 2, the Department received 815 eligible applications requesting over $10 billion. 30 projects were awarded a total of $488 million; awards were made to projects in 27 states and ranged from $239,000 to $25 million.
- Ports are eligible applicants.

Port of Kalama Ribbon Cutting at Spencer Creek Station



PNWA congratulates the Port of Kalama on the ribbon cutting of the first building at Spencer Creek Station, a major step forward for this 70-acre commercial and light industrial development. The new facility includes 16 flexible suites, starting at 2,400 square feet, with options for combined or two-story spaces. The first tenant, a local dance studio has already moved in.

During the event, speakers included Port Commissioner Patrick Harbison, State of Washington Senator John Braun, Cowlitz County Commissioner Steve Rader, and CERB Executive Director Janea Stark, all highlighting the project's role in supporting economic growth in Southwest Washington.

Seattle Times Article

Future of clean energy and salmon depends on collaboration, not courts

By Peter DeFazio and Norm Dicks

When President Franklin Roosevelt dedicated the Bonneville Dam in 1937, he called it a "yardstick for the future" — a promise that the Pacific Northwest could generate clean, affordable power for all. Nearly nine decades later, that promise endures. Hydropower remains the beating heart of our region's clean energy system, providing reliable, carbon-free electricity to millions of homes and businesses.

It's a legacy rooted in bipartisan support. Presidents, governors, and leaders of both parties have long recognized that hydropower is essential to the Northwest's prosperity and remains the foundation of state climate policies. During our time in Congress, we were part of a bipartisan coalition strongly committed to policies and public investment to protect and grow our cherished salmon populations while supporting hydropower.

Today, we face a challenge that demands the same spirit of collaboration and balance: how to ensure salmon and a strong hydropower system can share healthy rivers. That challenge should be met through thoughtful, inclusive dialogue that brings our region together.

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