

Issue # 908
Date 03/27/2026

AWO Pacific Region Annual Meeting



PNWA Executive Director Neil Maunu participated in the American Waterways Operators (AWO) Pacific Region Annual Meeting held on March 10 in Vancouver, Washington. The meeting brought together AWO members from across the region to discuss key maritime issues, including current advocacy priorities and evolving regulatory developments impacting the towing and barge industry.

Attendees also heard from representatives of local U.S. Coast Guard sectors, who provided updates on regulatory matters and operational considerations affecting regional waterways. The event offered valuable opportunities for industry collaboration, discussion of shared priorities, and networking during the evening reception and social dinner with fellow maritime professionals.

WIMOS Lunch & Learn



PNWA Executive Director Neil Maunu recently presented during a March Lunch and Learn in downtown Vancouver, connecting with members of Women In Maritime Operations (WIMOs). WIMOs is dedicated to supporting women in the maritime industry through education, mentorship, and professional development, with a focus on operational and technical careers. Through 150+ annual events, a national mentoring program, and a junior chapter, WIMOs fosters connection, career growth, and industry engagement under its motto, Educate. Engage. Elevate.

PNWA appreciates the opportunity to engage with WIMOs and share insights on the importance of navigation, infrastructure investment, and the critical role the maritime industry plays in supporting regional and national supply chains.

PNWA Attends National Harbor Safety Conference



The National Harbor Safety Conference is a biennial event that brings together maritime professionals from across the country to share best practices and strengthen collaboration across port communities. Through keynote presentations, panels, and technical briefings, participants exchange real-world insights, explore lessons learned, and discuss solutions

to current and emerging maritime challenges. The conference also highlights the critical role Harbor Safety Committees in addressing local issues and advancing national maritime priorities.

As a result of the government shutdown affecting the Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Coast Guard was unable to participate in the conference. However, the presentations on alternative fuels, shipboard fire safety particularly for lithium ion batteries, maritime workforce development, communication campaigns for boater safety, coordinating live exercises, lessons learned from the Francis Scott Key Bridge incident, harbor safety committee challenges and the various threats faced by the maritime transportation system, and federal agency perspectives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, NOAA, and MARAD were timely and informative. There were plenty of networking opportunities and a fire boat demonstration by the Seattle Fire Department.

Most exciting, the Lower Columbia Region Harbor Safety Committee (LCRHSC) won the Distinguished Harbor Safety Committee Award for its collaboration to organize an annual regional safety conference with Grays Harbor Safety Committee and Coos Bay Harbor Safety Committee to share information and best practices. Larry Landgraver of the Port of Longview and President of the LCRHSC accepted the award at the kickoff of the National Harbor Safety Conference. It was a wonderful way to start a worthwhile conference!

Port of Vancouver USA Lecture Series



PNWA was pleased to participate in the 2026 Port Lecture Series hosted by Port of Vancouver USA at the historic Kiggins Theatre. Executive Director Neil Maunu presented to an engaged audience of more than 200 attendees, highlighting the importance of Pacific Northwest waterways, the Marine Highway system, and PNWA's ongoing work to support navigation, trade, energy, and economic development across the region.

PNWA appreciates the opportunity to connect with the community and share how our region's "liquid highway" supports jobs, supply chains, and global competitiveness. Thank you to everyone who joined us for a thoughtful and engaging evening.

Be sure to check out Jennifer Riddle of Tidewater Transportation and Terminals presenting April 15 at 6:30 p.m. Learn more: <https://www.portvanusa.com/community/events/>

Tour Little Goose Lock & Dam Tour



PNWA recently hosted a tour of Little Goose Lock and Dam on the Lower Snake River, bringing together regional leaders and members for a behind-the-scenes look at this vital piece of infrastructure. With a portion of the dam closed for scheduled maintenance, participants had the rare opportunity to stand inside the empty navigation lock—an experience few get to see firsthand. The tour, organized by PNWA, highlighted the importance of routine maintenance in ensuring the reliability, safety, and long-term performance of the Columbia–Snake River System.

PNWA staff, including Executive Director Neil Maunu and Government Relations Specialist Nicole Kach, joined the visit and discussions with partners on the ground. PNWA extends sincere appreciation to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District for their leadership, insights, and continued commitment to maintaining a safe and efficient navigation system that supports communities, agriculture, and industry across the Northwest.

PNWA Attends Southwest Washington Legislative Review



The Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce, Identity Clark County, and Columbia River Economic Development Council hosted the annual Legislative Review with the Washington State Legislative delegation from the 17th, 18th, 20th, and 49th Legislative Districts. Although the majority of the Washington State Legislature is Democrat, the majority of Southwest Washington's delegation is Republican. The legislators conveyed that although the philosophical rhetoric seems diametrically opposed, the bulk of legislation passed is very bipartisan and that the Southwest Washington delegation is very cooperative and collaborative.

The following Legislators participated in the Legislative Review:

- 17th LD – State Representatives Kevin Waters (R), David Steube (R), and Senator Paul Harris (R)
- 18th LD – State Representatives Stephanie McClintock (R), John Ley (R), and Senator Adrian Cortes (D)
- 20th LD – State Representatives Peter Abbarno (R), Ed Orcutt (R), and Senator John Braun (R)
- 49th LD – State Representatives Sharon Wylie (D) and Monica Stonier (D)

The review started with a minor debate about the new “millionaire’s income tax” and whether Washington state should control spending or get creative on raising revenue to address needs. The group also discussed a lack of funding for child care, early learning, and a need for more workforce education program funds, affordable housing, and public safety. In addition, the impacts of federal policies including tariffs and immigration enforcement were discussed.

Under the Transportation and Infrastructure portion of the event, Rep. Stephanie McClintock (R-17th) noted funding was secured for dredging needs on the Columbia River to ensure waterway transportation continues to function for our region. Discussion of the rising costs of bridges like the I-5 Bridge and the Slough Bridge on SR-14 means the legislators are going to have to work together to ensure those critical projects are completed.

Welcome Nicole Kach, Government Relations Specialist



Nicole Kach
Government Relations
Specialist

PNWA is pleased to welcome Nicole Kach as Government Relations Specialist, joining the team in March 2026. Nicole brings experience in federal policy, legislative research, and communications, most recently serving with the National Waterways Conference. Her background also includes roles with Voices for National Service, AmeriCorps, and the U.S. Senate. She holds a degree in Political Science

from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and is based in Vancouver.

Contact her at: nicole.kach@pnwa.net

Comment Period Open for NXT Renewable Fuels Draft EIS

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has opened the public comment period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the NXT Renewable Fuels project at Port Westward. After nearly six years of review, this represents one of the final opportunities for public input before the Corps considers final permit approval.

Stakeholders are encouraged to participate by submitting comments or providing testimony during the virtual hearings.

Submit Comments

Email comments to nexteis@usace.army.mil with the subject line: “NWP-2020-00383: NXT Renewable Fuels.”

For assistance coordinating a comment, contact Michael Hinrichs at michael@nxtclean.com

Virtual Public Hearings

April 1 | 1:00–3:00 PM

April 2 | 6:00–8:00 PM

Pre-register to speak by

emailing nexteis@usace.army.mil

with your name, phone number, and preferred hearing date.

USDOT Releases FY26 PIDP NOFO

The U.S. Department of Transportation has released the [Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2026 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) (NOFO) for the Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP).

The FY26 NOFO is largely consistent with FY25, with several key updates:

Projects located in Qualified Opportunity Zones, those utilizing innovative technology, and those supporting national multimodal freight goals will receive priority consideration. Workforce development is no longer included as a selection criterion.

Shore power projects must now demonstrate how they improve the safety, efficiency, or reliability of goods movement.

The application scoring criteria now include a metric for supporting national multimodal freight goals, such as export competitiveness; support for critical supply chains (including minerals, steel, defense, and pharmaceuticals); energy sector support; reshoring advanced manufacturing; and strengthening the maritime industrial base.

A total of \$488.6 million is available, combining the final year of advanced appropriations from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law with additional FY26 Congressional funding.

Applications must be submitted by Friday, June 26. The Maritime Administration is expected to host webinars to assist applicants in preparing competitive submissions.

Regarding FY25 awards, selections are nearing final approval by USDOT and are anticipated soon. Additional funding may be included through reallocated funds from prior awards. Applicants who are not selected will have the opportunity to request debriefs from MARAD to strengthen future submissions.

The full PIDP NOFO is [available through USDOT](#).

FEMA Announces \$1 Billion in Federal Funding

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) released the FY 2024–2025 Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Program on March 25, 2026, making \$1 billion available for hazard mitigation and infrastructure resilience projects.

Key Focus

- Prioritizes ready-to-build infrastructure projects that reduce risks from disasters (flooding, wildfire, earthquakes, etc.)
- Emphasizes modern building codes and resilience standards
- Streamlines process to move funding faster
- Shifts more decision-making authority to states, territories, and Tribal Nations

Eligible Applicants

- States, territories, Tribal Nations
- Subapplicants: local governments, special districts, and communities

Funding Breakdown

- \$757M – National Competition (up to \$20M per project)
- \$112M – States/Territories (up to \$2M each)
- \$50M – Tribal Set-Aside (up to \$2M each)
- \$81M total – Building Code Plus-Up (state + Tribal)

Note: No applicant may receive more than 15% of total funding

Important Dates

- Application Opens: March 25, 2026
- Deadline: July 23, 2026 (120-day window)

Key Links

- Notice of Funding Opportunity: [Grants.gov](https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/learn/building-resilient-infrastructure-communities)
- Program Info: <https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/learn/building-resilient-infrastructure-communities>

USACE Public Notice

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Portland District, has issued the attached public notice regarding 2026 [Nationwide Permits Regional Conditions](#).

Public notices and announcements can be [viewed directly](#)

The page includes current and archived regulatory announcements, project updates, and public notices, providing transparency and keeping stakeholders informed of ongoing reviews and program developments.

Port of Everett, Laura Gurley Honor



PNWA staff recently visited the Port of Everett and the Port of Edmonds to connect with local leadership, discuss federal priorities, and hear firsthand about key issues impacting their operations and the broader maritime community. These conversations are critical to ensuring PNWA's advocacy reflects the needs of our members across the region.

During the visit, we were also pleased to recognize Laura Gurley of Port of Everett as a recipient of PNWA's 2025 Distinguished Service Award. This award honors individuals whose leadership and dedication have made a lasting impact on PNWA's mission, advancing regional projects, policies, and collaboration across the Northwest maritime industry.

Taste the Northwest Reception

PACIFIC NORTHWEST WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION



You're Invited
**Taste the Northwest
2026 Reception**

WHEN: Tuesday, April 21, 2026, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
WHERE: 325 Russell Senate Office Building

Join us for our annual Taste the Northwest Reception featuring refreshments and appetizers from Idaho, Oregon, and Washington!



No RSVP necessary, guests and colleagues welcome!
Taste the Northwest is a "widely attended event" and adheres to Congressional ethics guidelines.

Mission to Washington April 20-23, 2026



2026 PNWA Mission to Washington



NWC & PNWA Joint Summit

The 2026 Pacific Northwest Waterways Association Mission to Washington will bring members to Washington, D.C. for direct engagement with lawmakers, including two full days on Capitol Hill meeting with the Northwest Congressional delegation to advance regional priorities.

This year's Mission features a new partnership with the **National Waterways Conference**, offering a full day of high-level speakers and

national industry perspectives, plus the signature **Taste the Northwest**

Reception celebrating Pacific Northwest foods and agricultural products with members of Congress and their staff.

Registration is now open, and we encourage members to register and attend. Space is limited, and the hotel traditionally books up early and sells out. We look forward to seeing you in Washington, D.C., and encourage you to register early to secure your spot and avoid missing this opportunity.



2026 PNWA Mission to Washington



NWC & PNWA Joint Summit

The 2026 Pacific Northwest Waterways Association Mission to Washington will bring members to Washington, D.C. for direct engagement with lawmakers, including two full days on Capitol Hill meeting with the Northwest Congressional delegation to advance regional priorities.

This year's Mission features a new partnership with the **National Waterways Conference**, offering a full day of high-level speakers and national industry perspectives, plus the signature **Taste the Northwest**

Reception celebrating Pacific Northwest foods and agricultural products with members of Congress and their staff.

Registration is now open, and we encourage members to register and attend. Space is limited, and the hotel traditionally books up early and sells out. We look forward to seeing you in Washington, D.C., and encourage you to register early to secure your spot and avoid missing this opportunity.