



# Nor'wester newsletter

Issue #659 October 24, 2018

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## Water Resources Development Act signed into law

Yesterday, President Trump signed the Water Resources Development Act of 2018 into law. Earlier this year, we saw overwhelming bipartisan support for the bill, which served as Title I of the larger [America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 \(S. 3021\)](#). The House unanimously passed S.3021 on September 13th and the Senate voted 99-1 in favor of the legislation on October 11th.

"Passage of the Water Resources Development Act of 2018 is a win for our Nation's coastal communities," said Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Ranking Member Peter DeFazio (D-OR). "This critical legislation authorizes water infrastructure projects developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that will strengthen our ports, harbors, and waterways, and will create and sustain jobs. This bill is the product of a strong bipartisan, bicameral effort and I applaud my House and Senate colleagues for their hard work to get this legislation signed into law. In particular, I want to thank Chairman Shuster who is retiring and under whose leadership we have passed a WRDA bill every two years."

Keeping WRDA on a two-year schedule provides a consistent process for authorizing Corps projects and developing policies which govern the agency. [Highlights of the bill](#) for the Northwest include authorization of the Seattle Harbor deepening project, an expedited feasibility study for the Tacoma Harbor deepening project, and support of a land transfer between the Corps and the Port of Whitman County. The bill also includes a number of reports and studies related

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to administration and management of the agency, specifically with regard to Corps prioritization and oversight.

PNWA would like to thank our Northwest Congressional delegation for their support of this legislation, and of the provisions benefitting the Northwest. In particular, we would like to thank Congressman Peter DeFazio for his leadership as Ranking Member of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee (T&I), and for helping to ensure the needs of Northwest navigation are well represented as water resources discussions have moved forward this past year.

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## Orca task force meets again November 6th

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For those interested in attending and making public comment at the next meeting of the [Washington state task force](#) created to evaluate the decline of the Southern Resident Killer Whales, please mark your calendars for Tuesday, November 6th. We understand the meeting will take place in Puyallup at the Washington State Fair Events Center at 110 9th Avenue SW. When available, the full agenda will be posted on the task force's website.

On the subject of [Southern Resident Killer Whales](#) and their preferred prey of Chinook salmon, NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region released an [extensive new fact sheet](#) earlier this month. The document highlights the top Chinook populations for these three pods, as well as the status of various Chinook runs. Snake and Columbia River Chinook runs are noted as relative bright spots for the orcas as far as abundance, whereas NOAA notes that Puget Sound and other west coast Chinook runs are not showing improvement.

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## Interview with Columbia River Treaty negotiator Jill Smail

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The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs has posted an interview with Columbia River Treaty Chief Negotiator Jill Smail. In the [fifteen minute audio recording](#), Ms. Smail highlights key United States objectives, the importance of the Columbia River Treaty, and how the U.S. is engaging stakeholders and Tribes in the Columbia River Basin throughout the negotiating process.

The third round of negotiations with Canada took place October 17-18 in Portland, Oregon. The fourth round of negotiations are slated to take place December 12-13, in Vancouver, BC.

In the interview, Ms. Smail notes that another public town hall may occur in early 2019. The most recent town hall was on September 6th in Portland, OR and was attended by PNWA members and staff.

PNWA continues to highlight the Treaty in all Hill and Administration meetings, especially with regard to safe and efficient navigation, reliable irrigation, and cost-effective hydropower production. To learn more, check out our [fact sheet](#) or contact [Kristin Meira](#).

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