DEAR PNWA MEMBERS,

2016 was a very busy year for our organization. As I reflect on my first year as President, I am reminded of the strength of this organization and the wonderful members we have. It is truly an honor to serve as your President and I am very proud of all that we have accomplished, not only in 2016 but over the last 25 years.

There was a great deal to celebrate in 2016. Construction commenced on the Greens Harbor deepening project, the Seattle Harbor deepening study continues to move forward, and the extended lock closure is well underway making significant repairs at six of our eight locks and dams. We’ve also had a full year of no draft restrictions on the Lower Columbia River, the major rehab of Jetty A is nearly complete, and our coastal projects continue to receive critical dredging dollars. In addition, PNWA has played a vital role in discussions on the Water Resources Development Act; the Columbia River Treaty and the beginning of a new five-year analysis on Columbia Basin system operations.

I’m proud to say that the PNWA family continues to grow, with ten new members this year. They join an active and engaged membership and we welcome their voice and perspective. Our strength is in our numbers and in our broad regional approach. Our successes would not be possible without each and every one of you.

I’m also very proud of our PNWA staff. I am constantly amazed at their work ethic, deep understanding of the issues and dedication to our concerns. We are very fortunate to have such a fine team of people working on our behalf. 2017 will be a busy year as we educate a new Administration and continue our advocacy with the Northwest Congressional delegation, the Corps of Engineers and so many others. I look forward to serving as your President in the coming year, and to working with all of you to ensure we continue our great successes for the Northwest and the nation.

Captain Paul Amos
Pilot, Columbia River Pilots
President, Pacific Northwest Waterways Association

NAVIGATION FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS

This past year, Corps funding kicked off in early February with release of the FY2016 workplan and FY2017 budget. PNWA has been fighting hard on behalf of our members, and we were very pleased to see that over $47 million in additional funding was allocated to our supported projects in the workplan, for a total of $312.5 million in Corps funding directed to PNWA supported projects in FY2016.

There was also good news for the Northwest in the FY2017 President’s budget, with a significant number of projects receiving robust funding. Congress has delayed completion of the bill until at least March 2017 to allow for input from the incoming Administration. PNWA is continuing to lay the groundwork for success in FY2017, and is working with the agencies to make sure the needs of our members are known well in advance of work plan development.

BIoP RULING

In May, Judge Michael Simon issued his ruling on the Federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinion (FCRPS BiOp). Despite historic collaboration on the river, significant investments at the dams, major habitat improvements, and record returns for many of our Northwest salmon runs, Judge Simon ruled the federal agencies had not done enough to protect fish and properly evaluate alternatives. As a result, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bonneville Power Administration and the Bureau of Reclamation must embark on a five year National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) process to produce an updated Environmental Impact Statement as part of a new Biological Opinion due by September 2021.

As required by the NEPA, the federal agencies have started the process by holding sixteen public scoping meetings and two webinars to give residents a chance to identify areas of concern which could be evaluated. PNWA worked with our members and regional partners to spread awareness of the meetings and ensure the voice of river users was well represented. The comment period for this scoping process concludes February 7, 2017.

COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY

In 1964, the Columbia River Treaty was implemented by the United States and Canada to create a framework to manage the flow on the Columbia River for flood control and power generation. In late 2013, a regional recommendation was sent to the State Department, highlighting priorities for future Treaty talks.

For three years, the State Department has led an interagency review, and also selected a lead negotiator and deputy. In October 2016, the State Department finalized their Circular 175, the internal organizing document that authorizes their efforts as their team engages with Canada.

The State Department’s negotiator was a featured speaker at our 2016 Mission to Washington. PNWA has met with the negotiating team several times this year, including a port tour. PNWA continues to highlight the important roles of navigation, hydropower and irrigation in our region, and we look forward to continued engagement on this important issue.

WRDA

In 2014, Congress passed the first WRDA in seven years and both parties expressed an interest in returning to the traditional two year cycle for the bill. The House and Senate followed through on that goal and passed a bill in December 2016. Throughout the WRDA process, PNWA served as a trusted resource for the Northwest delegation and Committee staff. We have been the lead advocate working to make the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) set-aside for small ports permanent, have been active in discussions regarding full spending of the HMTF and donor port equity, and have supported inclusion of language addressing needs at the Port of Cascade Locks and the Willamette Falls Locks. PNWA was also part of a coalition that successfully advocated for the Columbia River Basin Restoration Act, to create a voluntary grant program that addresses toxins in the Columbia River Basin.

LOCK MAINTENANCE CLOSURE

For years, the Corps and PNWA have been building on the success of the 2010-2011 Columbia Snake River System extended lock maintenance closure. We have worked with our federal partners to secure funding for the 2016-2017 closure, which began on December 12th and will last for 14 weeks. Significant repairs and replacements will take place at six of the eight navigation locks, including a new upstream gate at The Dalles, lock controls at Bonneville, operating machinery at the Harbor and Lower Monumental, and hinge and crack repairs at McNary and Little Goose.

In addition to advocating for funding for these repairs, PNWA has been a key partner in the outreach process, facilitating communication with stakeholders, Congressional leaders and staff, and working with our partners at U.S. Wheat Associates to inform buyers overseas. We continue to serve as a trusted resource in the region and in DC, ensuring that our members and our Congressional leaders have the information they need to adequately prepare and support a closure of this kind. PNWA and our members are very appreciative of the work that will be accomplished, and the efforts of the Corps and their contractors to remain on schedule during this important maintenance period.

NEW MEMBERS IN 2016

Anchor QEA
Barney & Worth
Columbia River Crab Fisherman’s Association
Ecological Land Services, Inc.
Jesse’s Ilwaco Fish Co.
Maul Foster & Alongi
Miller Nash Graham & Dunn
Pias Newydd
Port of Willapa Harbor
Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation

PNWA 2017 EVENTS

Regional Meetings

Western Washington
February 16, 2017
Seattle, WA
Inland Empire
February 17, 2017
Tri-Cities Airport
Pasco, WA
Columbia River and Coast
February 21, 2017
Port of Portland
Portland, OR
Mission to Washington
March 12 – 16, 2017
Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill
Washington, DC
Summer Conference
June 19 – 21, 2017
Seattle Marriott Waterfront
Seattle, WA
Annual Convention
October 17 – 19, 2017
Embassy Suites Downtown
Portland, OR