

2024 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES - DRAFT

WATER & MARINE INFRASTRUCTURE

Support federal policy that **increases the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) budget and funds critical navigation projects on the Columbia River.**

Invest in the Corps' FY 2025 Operations & Maintenance (O&M) budget and continued implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), including the additional \$4 billion over five years for O&M on navigable waterways, which **supports the Columbia River ports' efforts to maintain a 43' shipping channel.**

- **Fund the Pile Dike Repair/Replacement Project** as Corps' O&M for the Columbia & Lower Willamette below Vancouver, WA & Portland, OR (potential 2024 WRDA request).
- Push for provisions in federal legislation that strongly **support the efficient processing and lowers cost for non-federal sponsors of federal environmental permits** (see Energy & Environment below).

Support funding and administrative changes for needed federal permitting reform to decrease the time and cost to successfully comply with federal requirements and directives. Emphasize consistent and timely agency permit review to allow planning for marine and surface infrastructure, economic development, and clean energy.

Promote policies and funding programs that support the competitiveness of U.S. public ports to prevent further cargo diversion to foreign ports of entry.

Priority Federal Capital Projects – The port has several priority capital projects related to moving cargo and services on the river which may apply for federal grants or as Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS)/Community Project Funding (CPF) requests, including reapplying in 2024 for the **Port Infrastructure Development Program grant for the Berth 8/9 Extension and Efficiency Improvements Project.**

FREIGHT POLICIES & FUNDING

Continue development of freight policies and funding programs at the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), the U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD), U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and other federal agencies that benefit or support public ports, international commerce, and maritime trade.

Support the continued implementation and full funding of the IIJA as well as additional federal appropriations for programs that target the freight needs at public ports, international commerce, and maritime trade.

- Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) (\$663 million in Senate FY 2024 THUD).
- Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity Program (RAISE) (\$2.72 billion in Senate FY 2024 THUD).
- Nationally Significant Multimodal Freight & Highway Projects (INFRA) (\$1.6 billion in FY Senate 2024 THUD).
- National Infrastructure Project Assistance Program (Mega) (\$1 billion in Senate FY 2024 THUD).
- Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program (\$600 million in the FY 2024 President's Budget Request).
- Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program (\$1.573 billion in Senate FY 2024 THUD).
- Marine Highways Program (MHP) (\$230 million in the FY 2024 President's Budget Request).

Provide further federal resources that ensure the timely replacement of the I-5/Columbia River Bridge, the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program (IBR). Actions may include:

- Advocacy for additional federal grant funding from all sources, such as those contained in the Bridge Investment Program (\$3.645 billion in Senate FY 2024 THUD) and FTA Capital Investment Grant (CIG) New Starts Program (\$4.05 billion in Senate FY 2024 THUD).
- Work with federal agencies, including the U.S. Coast Guard, to ensure any design restrictions of the IBR are reasonable and cost-effective while still focused on safety.

Enforce administrative rules and support legislative proposals for the safe shipment of goods, including energy products and hazardous materials, by road, rail, and water.

Priority Federal Capital Projects – The port has several priority capital freight projects which may apply or support a partner's application for federal grants or as CDS/CPF requests.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Support revitalization of the port's Terminal 1 waterfront project, a mixed-use development that is constructing a public market, hotel, retail, commercial, and community spaces.

- **The Maritime Dock Reconstruction Project** is a critical component of this Terminal 1 redevelopment. The port continues to aggressively seek needed federal funding to support the dock replacement, including opportunities available in existing programs, with grants in the IJIA and

through needed statutory changes such as those potentially included in the 2024 United States Maritime Administration Authorization Act.

- An example of a statutory change that could benefit the dock project would be to expand PIDP, or create a new program, to support tourism, and/or river cruise infrastructure, which would better track modern developments made by our public ports (see *Maritime Infrastructure: Public Ports Engage in an Extensive Range of Activities beyond Freight Movement*, GAO-22-104630, Dec 15, 2021).

Support federal tax policies that financially assist existing businesses and attract new tenants at public ports, including the New Market Tax Credits (NMTC). This is an important way the federal government provides tools to improve the overall economic environment to incentivize growth within public ports.

Ensure navigation on the Columbia River is protected as Columbia River Treaty negotiations continue. This includes recognizing the impacts of river flows on sediment management and vessel maneuverability on the lower Columbia River.

Support pro-export and pro-port national trade policies and practices. Tariffs and duties should not increase the costs of goods and services using our public ports. We must also ensure that there are no retaliatory actions by our trading partners.

Priority Federal Capital Projects – The port has several priority capital projects targeted at economic development which may apply for federal grants or as CDS/CPF requests, including the **Terminal 1 Maritime Dock Reconstruction Project** (see above) and the **Berth 10 Upgrades Project**.

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Provide adequate funding for federal agencies, including the Corps, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and NOAA Fisheries (NMFS), to efficiently process permits. Lack of funding for permitting or administrative changes that compromise existing permits could impact safety, significantly increase costs, impact economic development, and damage the environment. The IJJA provides funding to begin solving these problems, but ongoing focus is needed from Congress and permitting agencies. Previous efforts in these areas have had little or no impact, and the system is getting increasingly more challenging. Federal agencies must also improve communication, consistency, and timelines in the permitting process, and resolve the significant challenges regarding baseline conditions, compensatory mitigation, programmatic permits, and designation of dredged material placement sites. **These permitting problems hit the Pacific Northwest particularly hard and greater focus must be made on implementing cost-effective solutions in our region.**

Support efforts by the Administration or Congress to address climate change, including establishing grant programs that incentivize public ports and their partners to become more environmentally sustainable and efficient. Some programs included in the IJJA and in the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) could help public ports enhance our environment efforts and reduce greenhouse gas emissions,

especially with several existing federal initiatives that focus on supporting electrification of our transportation systems.

Make the Production Tax Credit (PTC) and other clean fuels credits permanent, or at a minimum authorize these important tools through 2024 to allow project planning and permitting. These credits support economic activity at the port by promoting our vibrant wind turbine business and aim to decrease our country's overall greenhouse gas emissions.

Ensure the Biological Opinion for the Columbia River continues to protect the environment and fish habitat while preserving regional economic vitality.

Include \$150 million for the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act program in FY 2025 (\$100 million in Senate FY 2024 Interior-Environment). This program has greatly reduced diesel emissions at our nation's public ports.

Priority Federal Capital Projects – The port has priority capital projects focused on supporting our Climate Action Plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These projects may apply for federal grants or as CDS/CPF requests, including applying in 2024 for an **EPA Clean Ports Program grant for the Port of Vancouver Electrification Project**.