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Wash. Maritime Federation Announces 2015 Legislative Victories

Significant work remains in 2016 to ensure strong and economically sustainable maritime sector

Seattle – The Washington Maritime Federation today announced its [2015 state legislative victories](#) at the [Legislative Summit](#) of National Conference of State Legislators, which brings together legislators and leaders from all 50 states. Building on the success of the 2015 session, which saw the passage of the Marine Tourism Bill and the state transportation package, [critical policy steps remain in 2016](#) for the maritime industry to continue to grow and compete on the global stage.

“While significant progress was made this past legislative session, much work remains in 2016 to ensure the long-term health of our state’s maritime industry, which provides family-wage jobs and long-lasting career opportunities for the middle class,” said Joshua Berger of the Washington Maritime Federation. “At NCSL, we can share our progress with other states, helping to lead the maritime industry nationwide.”

In January, Washington’s maritime industry held its first legislative action day in Olympia and introduced its inaugural [legislative priorities](#). More than 100 Washington Maritime Federation members walked the halls of the capitol to help educate elected officials about the maritime sector, which employs more than 148,000 Washingtonians and contributes \$30 billion to the economy each year.

“Washington’s maritime culture is strong. This year we got some great victories for our people and economy because we worked as a team,” said State Rep. Gael Tarleton, D-Seattle. “Let’s keep building on this success.”

Despite the progress, for the state maritime industry to compete on the global stage and continue to grow, elected leaders and policymakers need to advance common sense policy steps including:

- Incentives to rebuild Washington’s fishing fleet into the most advanced, safe and clean vessels in the most sustainable fishery in the world
- Dedicated funding for maritime-specific career technical training and education at the K-12 and community college level
- Maritime stakeholder input to land-use and environmental regulation to ensure a balanced and sustainable approach
- Full state funding in the upcoming biennial budget for the Department of Commerce Maritime Sector Lead position

“Fisheries in Alaska and the Pacific Northwest are among the most sustainably managed fisheries in the world. Unfortunately many of the boats that fish these waters are decades old and will see the end of their working life in the coming decade. That provides Pacific Northwest shipyards an exciting opportunity, potentially worth billions to the region, to build their replacements,” said Mark Gleason, Executive Director of the Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers.

“However, there is much work needed at both the state and federal level in order to make that opportunity a reality and bring these good paying, middle class jobs to Washington state.”

Objectives for the Washington maritime industry in 2016 include:

Recapitalization of the North Pacific Fishing Fleet

Washington is the historic home of the North Pacific commercial fishing fleet. Over 7,000 Washington residents directly participate in the North Pacific commercial fisheries annually, with over 34,000 direct and indirect jobs in our state attributed to the Alaska seafood industry. These activities contribute a tremendous positive economic impact for our state. Recapitalizing the fishing fleet as efficient, safe and clean vessels will provide significant economic benefits to the shipbuilding and maritime industry if built in Washington.

Workforce Development, Education and Training

The Washington Maritime Federation supports dedicated funding for maritime specific career technical training and education at the K-12 and community college levels. The Federation provides direct industry input with an alliance of education and training providers, working collaboratively to advance Washington’s leadership role as a sustainable, global marine industry. The Washington Maritime Workforce Initiative enhances the competitiveness of Washington’s exceptional maritime industry by providing innovative, relevant education and training to faculty, students and the incumbent workforce.

2015 legislative session results for the Washington maritime industry include:

Marine Tourism Bill

The Washington Maritime Federation applauds Sen. Barbara Bailey, R-Oak Harbor and Rep. Steve Tharinger, D-Sequim, for the passage of the Marine Tourism Bill. Realizing the economic importance of larger pleasure vessels staying, being serviced and provisioned in our waters, as opposed to other countries or states, this bill allows these vessels to remain in Washington waters for 180 days before they incur a significant tax penalty – an amount equal to the sales tax on the boat’s value. With the passage of this bill, Washington is estimated to see more than \$29 million in new economic activity.

Transportation Package

The Washington Maritime Federation applauds Gov. Jay Inslee, House Transportation Chair Judy Clibborn, D-Mercer Island, Senate Transportation Chair Curtis King, R-Yakima and elected leaders across the state on the historic compromise to pass the state transportation package. Thousands of Washington jobs, from ports and logistics companies to retailers and manufacturers, depend on the efficient movement of freight. Demonstrating that it is possible for freight and transit to co-exist, this package is the comprehensive solution needed from a system perspective.

Washington Maritime Federation

The Washington Maritime Federation is comprised of labor, business and maritime organizations across the state that are committed to keeping middle class communities strong, and supporting the long term commercial viability of our ports and industry in a global marketplace. For more information, please visit www.maritimefederation.com.

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