



**COMMISSION
AGENDA MEMORANDUM
BRIEFING ITEM**

Item No.	<u>11b</u>
Date of Meeting	<u>January 13, 2026</u>

DATE: January 2, 2025
TO: Stephen P. Metruck, Executive Director
FROM: Eric Schinfeld, Sr. Manager, Federal and International Government Relations
SUBJECT: **Federal Legislative Agenda for 2026**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the last twelve months, Port of Seattle government relations staff have worked with Commissioners, Port executives, and internal subject-matter experts to both execute the Port's Commission-approved 2025 federal policy priorities while simultaneously responding to one of the most significant federal policy overhauls of any Presidential Administration in history.

In partnership with our Congressional delegation and other public and private sector collaborators, the Port has been able to make progress at the federal level in ways that tangibly benefit the Port, the region, and the users of our aviation and maritime facilities. Similarly, the Port has been able to identify and address federal policies and programs that go against our values and/or negatively impact our operations.

The Trump Administration has radically reshaped federal policy on everything from trade and energy to equity and immigration. These changes have required the Port to adjust its practices, enhance its advocacy, and even engage in litigation. However, the Port has found ways to continue to make progress, in small but impactful ways, and to also position itself as a strong advocate for our mission, our constituents, and our community when we see federal policies that are problematic.

With the November 2026 elections in the forefront, there is likely to be limited legislative action in Washington, DC in the year ahead. To that end, the Port's draft 2026 federal agenda includes a more limited list of opportunities for progress as well as several areas that are potential risks or concerns. We anticipate a balanced effort of both "offense and defense" in the year ahead.

Following Commission feedback on this draft legislative agenda, staff will revise and bring a final proposed agenda for full Commission approval. Staff will then begin engaging local and national partners to pursue the successful passage and implementation of these priorities.

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

I. Areas of Potential Progress

- a. Fiscal Year 2026 & 2027 Appropriations Investments:** Work closely with Congressional leaders to ensure that any final fiscal year 2026 (FY26) and 2027 (FY27)

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appropriations legislation includes proposed investments that would benefit the Port, including:

- i. **Funding to add Customs & Border Protection Officers**, including a focus on deploying a significant portion of these new staff to air and sea gateways.
- ii. **Funding for key Transportation Security Administration (TSA) programs**, including Transportation Security Compensation Program, the law enforcement officer (LEO) reimbursement program, the state/local canine law enforcement officer reimbursement program, and the TSA staffing of exit lanes.
- iii. **Provide airports with a CERCLA liability exemption** for federally required PFAS use as well as **funding for the Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Transition Grant Program** to help airports with the transition to these new foams, including the costs of replacing or cleaning current equipment.
- iv. **Funding of the Port's Two FY26 "Community Directed Spending" Requests and Successful application for additional FY27 CDS funding**

b. Implementation of Congressionally Approved Policies:

- i. **Ensure FAA implementation of the four StART Priorities included in the 2024 FAA Reauthorization legislation**, including the provision directing a study of ultrafine particles from aircraft engines; a report on federal programs and policies relating to adding airport capacity; the development of a deadline and a stakeholder advisory group for the FAA's Noise Policy Review.
- ii. Ensure implementation of legislation in the 2025 National Defense Authorization Act that directs the FAA to **allow up to two (2) airports to use existing federal funding to repair or replace federally funded sound insulation** in near-airport residences.
- iii. **Conduct a joint Port-Airport Cities DC Fly-in** to jointly advocate for these priorities

c. Pursuit of Grant Funding: Work closely with federal partners to successfully apply for grant funding from relevant, existing federal programs like the Airport Terminal Grant (ATG) Program, the Airport Infrastructure Grant (AIG), BUILD, INFRA, and the Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP).

- i. Support local partner grants that are aligned with Port goals and interests, particularly the Northwest Seaport Alliance.

d. Trade & Maritime

- i. Work with Congressional leaders to support policies and programs that can **enhance domestic ship building capacity**
- ii. Support trade policies that disincentivize cargo diversion from the Pacific Northwest to Canada
- iii. Ensure continued implementation of the donor port funding program and other HMT reform provisions in Section 102 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2020.
- iv. Secure appropriations for the HMT donor port program authorized under Section 2106 of the 2014 Water Resources Reform and Development Act.

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- v. Secure funding for design phase of the West Waterway portion of the Seattle Harbor Navigation Improvement Project, which will deepen the federal channels serving T-5 in Seattle Harbor.
- vi. Secure funding for design phase of the Tacoma Harbor Navigation Improvement Project. The project will deepen the Blair Waterway to accommodate ultra-large container ships at key NWSA cargo facilities.
- vii. Support full **funding for continued federal operation and maintenance of the Hiram M. Chittenden Locks.**

e. Clean Energy and Environment

- i. **Secure Farm Bill programs that support sustainable aviation fuels**
- ii. **Promote alternative maritime fuels**, including hydrogen, as key sources of energy independence for the country.
- iii. Support **major permitting reform legislation** that makes it easier to site new clean energy facilities.
- iv. Advocate for full **funding for Puget Sound restoration and Southern Resident Killer Whale (SRKW) protection**, including funding to support habitat restoration, to sustain Chinook salmon populations and other species critical to SRKW recovery, to help clean up legacy sources of contaminants that affect SRKW, to better understand and reduce impacts of vessel- and marine construction-related underwater noise, and to manage stormwater runoff.
- v. Support full **funding for regulatory staff for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** to reduce permit and mitigation bank approval backlogs.

II. Areas of Potential Concern

a. Highlight Risks of New Policies to Port Business, Operations and Employees

- i. Express the need for **trade enforcement actions such as tariffs and quotas to be carefully and narrowly targeted** to address problems and minimize the unintended impacts on American producers and consumers.
 - 1. Advocate for productive engagement and negotiations that ensure a fair and level playing field for mutually beneficial trade.
- ii. Be a leading voice on **immigration policies that ensure the Port, its partners, and its customers have the workforce to succeed** in the global economy, and that immigrants and refugees are actively included in the opportunities that our region's economy provides.
 - 1. Take steps to support workers and travelers impacted by changes in immigration policy
 - 2. Take all available steps to limit the use of Port facilities for immigration detention and deportation
- iii. Be a strong advocate for **keeping the United States open to travelers and visitors from throughout the world**, without discrimination based on specific individual characteristics

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- iv. Push back against **policies that would limit the Port’s ability to pursue equity, diversity and inclusion efforts** throughout our organization, or would limit our access to federal dollars because of those efforts.

ATTACHMENTS TO THIS PRESENTATION -

- (1) Presentation slides

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS

- January 23, 2024 – The Commission approved the 2024 Federal Legislative Agenda.
- January 24, 2023 – The Commission approved the 2023 Federal Legislative Agenda.
- January 25, 2022 – The Commission approved the 2022 Federal Legislative Agenda.
- January 12, 2021 – The Commission approved the 2021 Federal Legislative Agenda.
- January 28, 2020 – The Commission approved the 2020 Federal Legislative Agenda.
- December 10, 2018 – The Commission approved the 2019 Federal Legislative Agenda.
- January 9, 2018 – The Commission approved the 2018 Federal Legislative Agenda.