



COMMISSION
AGENDA MEMORANDUM

BRIEFING ITEM

Item No. 11b

Date of Meeting January 27, 2026

DATE: January 16, 2026

TO: Stephen P. Metruck, Executive Director

FROM: Melissa Parks, Government Relations Manager, Maritime Sustainability

SUBJECT: 2026 Draft International Policy Agenda

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Port of Seattle Commissioners, executive team members, and internal subject-matter experts are engaging internationally to build relationships, share the opportunities and challenges of operating maritime and aviation gateways, and advocate in support of Port goals that are beyond our direct authority. This memo updates the Port's international policy priorities to guide and inform our engagement for 2026.

DETAIL

Driven by the Century Agenda, the Port is working to achieve ambitious goals that maintain Puget Sound as a premier international gateway for commerce and tourism that benefits the region while ensuring equity, sustainability, and quality of life for our region's residents. The Port of Seattle also strives to be a welcoming environment for our communities, visitors, and businesses. While the Port can modernize our facilities, set policies, and make investments in line with our values, we have limited control over the commercial aircraft and maritime vessels that utilize our gateway. Given that many of the ships and aircraft calling on our port have international itineraries, or are owned by companies with global reach, we need international standards and cooperation to fully achieve the Port's goals.

In 2025 the United States federal government's foreign policy and international priorities disrupted and challenged established norms, contributing to global instability in trade and diplomatic relations. The Port of Seattle continued its direct international engagement and experienced the critical role of subnational diplomacy in global venues where the United States federal presence has retreated.

In 2026, we anticipate the United States federal government to increasingly turn away from global collaboration and support in favor of increasing isolationism and assertive tactics. At the same time, this will be a significant year of international attention on Seattle as a host of the world's largest sporting event, the FIFA Men's World Cup. This is an opportunity for the Port and greater Seattle community to positively grow our international profile as a welcoming, modern

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city. Similar to 2025, the Port will continue our direct engagement with port partners and participation in global forums to make progress on our goals.

Success of these international priorities will be achieved through highlighting the Port's continued local investments as well as through engagement, collaboration, and alignment on issues with international ports and representatives, subnational governments, industry associations, private industry, non-governmental organizations, and where possible, the United States government.

Following Commission feedback on these draft priorities, staff will revise and bring final proposed international priorities for full Commission approval.

2026 INTERNATIONAL POLICY PRIORITIES

Promote Transparency, Collaboration, and Consistency

Encourage transparency and broad engagement in developing globally consistent standards and policies for aviation and maritime industries to promote public awareness, industry alignment, and certainty for planning and effective implementation. Coordinate with The Northwest Seaport Alliance on international maritime engagement.

Promote collaboration, share best practices and challenges, and foster relationships to develop comprehensive solutions to complex global issues and help achieve our goals by engaging in key international forums such as the International Civilian Aviation Organization (ICAO), International Maritime Organization (IMO), United Nations Climate Conference of Parties; with international partners including our sister ports, particularly, Busan, Kobe, Rotterdam, and Singapore; and industry associations and non-government organizations including Airports Council International, International Association of Ports and Harbours (IAPH), and Getting to Zero Coalition.

Promote Equity, Environmental Justice, and Sustainable Development

Promote and support the adoption of principles and values by international organizations that commit them to equity, environmental justice, and sustainable development, as well as engaging communities most impacted by industries associated with port operations. Actively seek opportunities to partner with other organizations in achieving equity and environmental justice goals.

Advocate for policies, programs, projects, and investments that support and welcome immigrants and refugees, encouraging organizations to adopt policies that create inclusive ports of entry, advance language access, promote international travel, and ensure safe and healthy communities, like the recently updated Welcoming Port Policy.

Advocate for policies, programs, projects, and investments that advance equity, support environmental and economic justice, and implement the United Nations'

Sustainable Development Goals and United Nations Development Program's Environmental Justice Technical Report. Solutions must be co-developed with and center the experiences and voices of the communities most impacted.

Actively pursue international collaborations and partnerships to advance our workforce development programs. Encourage international organizations to develop and strengthen workforce development programs in the maritime, aviation, construction, and green jobs industries, sharing resources, information, and best practices.

Respecting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Support the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the ways it works to uphold and defend Tribal Sovereignty.

Addressing Climate Change and Reducing Air Emissions

Support robust and immediate climate action, policies, and initiatives, like the Paris Agreement and Clydebank Declaration, that demonstrate ambitious, feasible, and equitable approaches to mitigate climate changing factors and prepare for climate impacts, even if the United States is no longer a party to such agreements.

Encourage international organizations to incorporate environmental justice principles into their climate policy that are people-centered, developed with impacted communities, and seeks mitigation as well as better quality of life for communities who are experiencing the burden of climate change.

Support data-informed decision-making based on scientific information (quantitative and qualitative) and lived experiences; progress reporting; and information sharing on global climate impacts and mitigation and adaptation strategies relevant to the Port, King County, or the Pacific Northwest.

Monitor international developments of standards for safe handling and storage of emerging alternative aviation and maritime fuels, such as hydrogen and methanol, as well as new technologies at the ICAO and IMO. Provide input on issues that could impact worker and community safety and airport and seaport operations.

Support ICAO implementation of policy instruments, including the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme (CORSIA), to achieve net zero aviation emissions by 2050 and encourage research and investments that accelerate the uptake and supply of Sustainable Aviation Fuel.

- (1) Monitor developments related to emissions and other aviation environmental impacts within the ICAO Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP) that assists the ICAO Council in formulating new policies and adopting new

Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) related to emissions, and more generally to aviation environmental impact.

Monitor international policies and incentives for producing, distributing, and building infrastructure for sustainable aviation and maritime fuels.

Support the IMO's adoption of policies to reduce climate and air pollution emissions from commercial shipping by 2050 including:

- (1) Global maritime fuel standard that reduces the intensity of greenhouse gas emissions in fuel over time and meets sustainability criteria.
- (2) Economic measures that create a level playing field globally and incentivizes the supply and use of low and zero emission maritime fuels.
- (3) Ports as an eligible entity to receive future emissions revenue.
- (4) Just Transition policy that works to equitably distribute gains and reduces the risk to developing countries in the transition to low and zero emission fuels.

Encourage knowledge sharing, especially between Green Shipping Corridors and their international partners, to accelerate supply and uptake of low and zero greenhouse gas emission fuels and maximize participation by ports and ships. Engage the U.S federal government and other international governing bodies in these conversations.

Contribute to efforts coordinated by IAPH to standardize shore power connections and power distribution differences to increase interoperability between ports and ships and increase connection rates.

Monitor development of international standards for offshore wind and other alternative energy developments; and encourage collaboration in standards between governments and leading international developers to reduce barriers to deployment. Support the development of offshore wind and alternative energy supply chains that prioritize low greenhouse gas emissions, economic development, and social equity.

Reducing Aviation and Maritime Noise

Monitor and support developments to reduce noise from commercial aircraft by the ICAO Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP), including through aircraft technology and airport operational best practices.

Support the IMO's voluntary guidelines to reduce underwater noise from ships and share experiences and outcomes from the Port of Seattle's efforts to help inform uptake and use of the guidelines.

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Improving Water Quality/Marine Health

Monitor the IMO's development of standards for the discharge of wash water from exhaust gas cleaning systems and the use of risk and impact assessments to inform decisions about restrictions or limits to wash water discharge.

Encourage awareness of, and actions to reduce, ocean acidification impacts to global marine ecosystems, communities, and associated industries. Share Port research on local, nature-based carbon remediation including kelp and eelgrass enhancement, with international partners through the International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification.

Combat and Reduce Human Trafficking

Monitor and encourage efforts at ICAO, the IMO, and other international organizations we engage with to increase awareness of and combat human trafficking in aviation and maritime industries and share the Port's experience with supporting the national awareness campaign. Highlight the Port's public-private partnership with local organizations to combat human trafficking. Seek opportunities to partner and expand this work in preparation for hosting the 2026 World Cup, including sharing resources, such as the Anti-Human Trafficking Toolkit for host cities that the Port will finalize in Q1 2026.

Support Sustainable Tourism

Support the Global Sustainable Tourism Council and similar organizations' best practices that balance the environmental, social, cultural, and economic aspects of tourism and share the Port's, and our Washington State tourism partners', sustainable and inclusive tourism best practices.

ATTACHMENTS

- (1) Presentation

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS

- January 27, 2025 – The Commission approved the 2025 International Policy Agenda
- January 14, 2025 – The Commission was briefed on the draft 2025 International Policy Agenda
- February 27, 2024 – The Commission approved the 2024 International Policy Agenda
- February 3, 2024 – The Commission was briefed on the draft 2024 International Policy Agenda