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*Pacific NorthWest
Economic Region*

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PNWER Applauds Passage of the Promoting Travel, Commerce, and National Security Act

The Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER) applauds the passage of the Promoting Travel, Commerce and National Security Act on Saturday, December 10. The act improves security by preclearing passengers before they enter the United States from Canada and will expedite cross-border travel in the Pacific Northwest by eliminating double inspections that currently occur for ferries and rail.

Preclearance will strengthen the region's \$55 billion travel and tourism sector by making cross-border transit more efficient for business travelers, tour operators, and independent leisure travelers. Some of the expected benefits of preclearance to the Pacific Northwest include reduced wait times for passengers on rail carriers, including Amtrak Cascades and Rocky Mountaineer; ferries such as the Victoria Clipper, Black Ball and Washington State Ferries, and for cruise lines operating out of Seattle and Vancouver, according to a [white paper](#) developed in 2015 by PNWER's Preclearance Implementation Taskforce.

PNWER has played a major role in pushing for this legislation over the last two years. The taskforce has held monthly calls to coordinate implementation of the agreement and provide input on technical design standards for facilities. The group includes U.S. and Canadian border officials, government representatives and private stakeholders, including Amtrak, Rocky Mountaineer and Clipper Vacations.

PNWER officers and representatives also educated congressional leaders and their staff on the economic and security benefits of pre-clearance.

Preclearance is a key element of the [US-Canada Beyond the Border Action Plan](#), but required legislation to be passed in both Canada and the U.S. prior to implementation. The Canadian version of the bill has been introduced and is supported by current and previous governing parties, the Conservatives and Liberals, and is expected to pass by spring 2017.

"Preclearance has been an important issue here in the Northwest, especially because we have the most pre-inspection sites that can be upgraded to preclearance, and we're excited to see it passed," said PNWER Executive Director Matt Morrison. "The U.S. and Canada share one of the best trade relationships in the world, but improving the flow of goods and travelers across the border will greatly benefit region's interconnected travel and tourism economy."

Preclearance exists at eight major Canadian airports, but this bill will extend the service to trains, ferries and cruise ships. The first pilot projects will likely occur at train stations in Vancouver, British

Columbia and Montreal, and would only begin once implementation bills become law in both countries.

“This process streamlines the experience for the traveling public and brings it in line with their experience with other travel modes,” said Kurt Laird, Amtrak Deputy General Manager.

“It eliminates delays to the train associated with passengers that are detained and unable to enter either county. It also reduces the overall run-time and increases the predictability of the route between endpoint city pairs. This reduction results in increased ridership and revenue for the route.”

The Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER) is a public/private non-profit created by statute in 1991. Member jurisdictions include Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Montana and Washington, and the Canadian provinces and territories of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories and Yukon.

PNWER's mission is to increase the economic well-being and quality of life for all citizens of the region; identify and promote "models of success;" and serve as a conduit to exchange information.