

Key Accomplishments for Oregon

The Pacific NorthWest Economic Region has been working hard to build partnerships to address challenges faced by Oregon and bring the voice of the state and Pacific Northwest region to Washington, D.C. and Ottawa.



In 2024, PNWER continued working to enhance economic development for member jurisdictions, open pathways for communication and coordination across borders, and develop a better understanding of the interdependent economy across the region. Some of the recent successes for Oregon include:

Legislative Energy Horizon Institute (LEHI)

Since 2009, more than 440 legislators from across the U.S. and Canada have graduated from PNWER's Legislative Energy Horizon Institute, which **focuses on the North American energy infrastructure and delivery systems**, covering energy generation, transmission, and distribution. Since the program's inception, **37 Oregon legislators** have graduated from LEHI. **PNWER provides full scholarships for PNWER legislators covering the cost of tuition, accommodations, and travel expenses totaling over \$360,000 for Oregon.**



2024 LEHI Graduating Cohort at the Embassy of Canada to the U.S. in D.C.

Hydrogen

The Pacific Northwest Regional Clean Hydrogen Hub (PNWH2), is one of 7 hubs nationally to be selected and awarded up to \$1B in funding by the U.S. Department of Energy. The PNWH2 Hub includes projects in Washington, Oregon, and Montana. Hydrogen refueling stations and the repurposing of power plants in Oregon are examples of expanding hydrogen opportunities in the State. **PNWER is conducting a first-of-its-kind study between British Columbia and Washington State and neighboring jurisdictions, including Oregon, to explore opportunities for building out the regional hydrogen economy. The study will include recommendations for hydrogen development, collaboration, and growing of the regional hydrogen ecosystem.**

Aquatic Invasive Species

For over 20 years, PNWER has led the effort to ensure quagga and zebra mussels receive the required attention and funding to develop prevention and response planning in the Pacific Northwest. In 2024, the PNWER Executive Board unanimously passed an action item enabling the PNWER Secretariat to seek funding from federal and non-federal sources for enhanced regional Northwest transboundary zebra and quagga mussel prevention and response readiness. More than 25 legislators signed a joint letter to the governors of Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington, urging action on this imminent threat. PNWER continues to provide support to secure the federal appropriation for the USACE match program. **Because of PNWER, from 2017 to 2024, Pacific Northwest states have leveraged over \$39M federal match funds from this program. Oregon has utilized almost \$4.5M in this program for watercraft inspection and decontamination.**



Invasive quagga
zebra mussels on a
boat rudder

Columbia River Treaty

The Columbia River is a staple of Oregon's ecosystem and culture that provides many benefits to the region's economy, including hydropower, irrigation, shipping, fish habitat, drinking water, and recreation. In July 2024, the United States and Canada reached an agreement in principle on the key elements of a modernized Columbia River Treaty regime. **Lead US Negotiator, Jill Smail, presented the details of the agreement at the 2024 PNWER Annual Summit.** The negotiation teams continue to collaborate on the final text of treaty amendments to make many of the interim measures more permanent. Once complete, we anticipate these amendments will go to the U.S. Senate for advice and consent. Throughout the process, PNWER has provided significant opportunities for key stakeholders to provide input to negotiators. PNWER will continue to work with negotiators on both sides of the border on this important treaty.

Border and Trade

In 2023, **Oregon exported roughly \$3.5B worth of products to Canada**, making Canada Oregon's third largest trading partner. PNWER works closely with CBP, CBSA, DHS and Public Safety Canada on advancing smart U.S.-Canada border management, and implementing innovative, clear and consistent policies that facilitate travel and trade.



*Pacific NorthWest
Economic Region*

2024

Key Accomplishments for Oregon Continued

Agriculture & Livestock Health

Canada is Oregon's top agricultural export market, accounting for **over a quarter of total agriculture and agri-food exports in 2023**. This regional trade connection plays an important part in supporting the state's agricultural economy and workforce connected to it. In 2024, state/provincial and federal veterinarians and animal health leaders partnered at the PNWER Summit to take steps to help the region prepare for a response to a foreign animal disease (FAD) outbreak. Animal health leaders gathered to test plans, explore opportunities for collaboration and build relationships and trust during a two-day tabletop exercise. The discussion-based exercise was designed around communication and incident coordination during an emerging threat of transboundary disease outbreak (foot-and-mouth disease) along the U.S.-Canada border. Follow-on activities and discussions are planned for 2025 during the PNWER Summit in Bellevue, WA. Funding for the exercise was provided by the Washington Department of Agriculture through the state Homeland Security grant program and PNWER Canada. All the materials are available to state departments of agriculture.

Regional Infrastructure Accelerator

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Build America Bureau awarded PNWER a **\$2M grant** to continue advancing infrastructure development through its five-state Regional Infrastructure Accelerator (RIA). Notable Oregon projects selected for acceleration include the **Hood River-White Salmon Bridge** replacement, **Umpqua Indian Development Corporation ZEV commercial refueling facilities** and the **Amtrak Cascades** corridor service improvement strategy. **Learn more about Oregon's rail network at the fourth annual Greater Northwest Rail Summit in Portland on October 16-18, 2025**. Visit www.RIAnorthwest.org for more information.

Tourism

During its 2023 Annual Summit, PNWER established a Regional Tourism Council (RTC) with the goal of convening regional tourism leaders to provide expertise and advice to help market our region to the world. The Regional Tourism Council is composed of an elected official and a tourism industry representative from each of our 10 PNWER jurisdictions. **Oregon's representatives on the Regional Tourism Council are Representative Emerson Levy and Kevin Wright from Travel Oregon**. As part of this initiative, PNWER secured funding to develop a regional tourism portal to help provide destination marketing for Oregon and other states in the region. This portal will provide a way to reach visitors from other countries interested in specific tourism opportunities that are unique to Oregon.



2025 PNWER Annual Summit Info

Designing for Resilience

Recent disasters have made it abundantly clear that the models and data that guide how we design and build our cities and infrastructure may need to be updated. The high costs of disaster recovery suggest that current building codes may need to be revised to meet the challenges we are most likely to experience in the future. The growing frequency of costly disasters, including wildfires and floods, is a continuing contributing factor that has led many insurance providers to vacate certain lines or geographic areas or to raise prices to levels that many homeowners or businesses cannot afford. PNWER works with partners across the region to meet these challenges and continues to work to develop a regional strategy to address some of these growing concerns.

2025 Annual Summit

This year's PNWER Annual Summit will be in Bellevue, WA from July 20 - 24. The PNWER Annual Summit provides the opportunity to collaborate and establish partnerships with Canadian & U.S. public & private sector leaders, learn about key economic issues facing the region, strengthen regional networks and cooperation, and advocate for regional policies and cross-jurisdictional initiatives. This year's summit theme is '**Building a Resilient Future: Sustainable Growth through Innovation**'. Learn more and register at www.pnwer.org/2025-summit.



Sen. Lew Frederick speaking on the Housing Panel at the 2024 PNWER Annual Summit

For more information on PNWER programs and opportunities to get involved, contact Matt Morrison at matt.morrison@pnwer.org or (206) 443-7723