



Key Accomplishments for Washington

The Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER) has been actively **building partnerships to tackle challenges facing Washington** while ensuring the state's voice—and that of the broader Pacific Northwest region—is effectively represented in 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 Washington include:

Border

In 2023, **Washington exported roughly \$9.6 billion worth of products to Canada**, making Canada Washington's second largest trading partner. Washington and British Columbia share 13 active border crossings, including the third busiest passenger border crossing at Peace Arch. 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.

Aquatic Invasive Species

Preventing Quagga and Zebra Mussels in the Region: For over 20 years, collaborative efforts in the Pacific Northwest have successfully prevented the infestation of invasive Quagga and Zebra (QZ) mussels, **which could have an annual impact of \$500M**. A recent second detection in the Snake River near Twin Falls, Idaho, marks an alarming escalation. As a response in May, more than 25 PNW legislators, led by PNWER Delegate Rep. Mary Dye, signed a joint letter to the governors of Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington, urging action on this imminent threat. PNWER continues to be a strong advocate to secure federal match funding for the region for quagga and zebra mussel prevention. **From 2017 to 2024, PNW states have leveraged over \$39 million from this program. WA has utilized over \$5.3M in this program.** WA State has double their contribution since 2022 up from \$700,000 to \$1.4M. The Governor's 2025-26 budget call for a continuation at this funding level. Changes to 2024 WRDA added more basin and changed the matching ratio in favor of the states. In December, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and PNWER convened a statewide summit in Spokane, gathering over 75 stakeholders to address the urgent threat of quagga and zebra mussels.

Energy

Pacific Northwest Hydrogen Study: PNWER is conducting a **first-of-its-kind study** exploring how British Columbia and Washington state can collaborate in developing and growing the hydrogen economy in their jurisdictions. There is a specific focus on opportunities in relation to the Pacific Northwest Regional Clean Hydrogen Hub (PNWH2), an initiative by the U.S. Department of Energy. The PNWH2 proposal, which spans Washington, Oregon and Montana, was one of seven national hubs selected for an award of up to \$1 billion USD over eight years.

Legislative Energy Horizon Institute: PNWER's Legislative Energy Horizon Institute (LEHI) **continues to educate state and provincial legislators, governors advisors and policymakers** on North American energy infrastructure and delivery systems. Since 2009, 56 Washington policymakers and governors advisors have graduated the LEHI program. Visit www.lehi.institute for more information.

Regional Infrastructure Accelerator

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Build America Bureau awarded PNWER a **\$2 million grant** to continue advancing infrastructure development through its five-state Regional Infrastructure Accelerator (RIA). Notable projects for Washington include the Cascades Corridor Rail and Port Investment Strategy, the Hood River-White Salmon Bridge Replacement Project, High Performance Rail Working Group, and the Build Northwest Center of Excellence. Learn more about PNWER RIA at www.RIAnorthwest.org.



L-R: OR Sen. Chris Gorsek, OR Rep. Kevin Mannix, WA Rep. Jake Fey, WA Rep. Andrew Barkis and Luis Moscoso discuss regional rail partnerships at the Greater NW Rail Summit in Spokane, WA, in October.

Columbia River Treaty

The Columbia River provides many benefits to Washington's economy, including hydropower, transportation, irrigation, drinking water, and fish habitats. **PNWER hosted U.S. State Department lead negotiator Jill Small virtually at the 2024 Annual Summit to brief on the agreement in principal between the U.S. and Canada on the future of the Treaty.**



Regional Tourism

PNWER established a Regional Tourism Council (RTC) with the goal of convening regional tourism leaders to provide expertise and stability, which will be invaluable to the success of our region as a leader of responsible, sustainable, and resilient tourism. The Regional Tourism Council is composed of an elected official and a tourism industry representative from each of our ten PNWER jurisdictions. Representative Cindy Ryu co-chairs the RTC with David Blandford of State of Washington Tourism

representing the WA tourism industry on the Council. The initial focus of the RTC is on **strategic regional planning in preparation for the 2026 FIFA Men's World Cup.**

PNWER was awarded a grant from the Port of Seattle's Tourism Marketing Support Program to develop a comprehensive PNW (U.S.-Canada) regional tourism marketing and traveler information portal for domestic and international visitors which will promote travel through Port of Seattle-owned facilities and encourage travel throughout the broader bilateral Pacific Northwest region.

Cross Border Livestock Health Exercise

State/provincial, federal veterinarians and animal health leaders partnered at the 2024 PNWER Annual 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. **Funding for the exercise was provided by Washington Department of Agriculture through the state Homeland Security grant program** and PNWER Canada. Washington's State Veterinarian Dr. Amber Itle was awarded PNWER's "Hot Potato Award" during the Summit in Whistler, B.C. for her ongoing dedication to working on cross-border animal disease coordination efforts as a co-chair of PNWER's Cross-Border Livestock Health Working Group over many years.





2025 PNWER Annual Summit Info

2025 PNWER 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. Visit www.pnwer.org/2025-summit.



Stephanie Helm (left) presents the Washington State Invasive Species Council Distinguished Leader Award to WA Rep. Mary Dye (right) at the 2024 AIS Summit.



PNWER Legislators AK Sen. Löki Gale Tobin and WA Sen. Marko Liias participate in a exercise on utility resource planning at LEHI.



*FIFA World Cup
Emergency
Management
Planning Luncheon
in Seattle, WA.*

*Greater Northwest
Rail Summit
convened over 150
rail industry leaders,
policymakers and
advocates in
Spokane, WA.*

