



March 12, 2015

Governor Jay Inslee  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee:

Washington state knows firsthand that trade matters. As one of the most trade-dependent states in the nation, 40 percent of our employment is tied to trade-related industries. Washington and its people take pride in knowing that the things we make and build are valued here and around the world. Equally important to Washingtonians, while working to build a thriving economy, we have built and maintained our environmental integrity as a leader in protecting the natural beauty and health of the Evergreen state.

Keep Washington Competitive, a diverse coalition of business, labor, agriculture, and trade organizations and leaders, have joined together to promote this critical balance of bi-lateral trade growth in Washington and environmental protection through sound state policies.

As Governor, you have the ability to maintain Washington's status as a strong base for interregional and global trade by addressing challenges head on, using the principles developed by Keep Washington Competitive. By fostering a regulatory environment that encourages investment in the state and strikes the appropriate balance on the need for rigorous environmental scrutiny, we will ensure our trade industry is well positioned to compete in the highly competitive national and international marketplace. Your recent call to streamline the permitting process as part of your transportation package is just one example of how government can expedite work on critical infrastructure projects.

Still, other hurdles exist and must be removed to enhance jobs and reinforce our trade status. There are currently several issues facing the state that could jeopardize trade related jobs and growth, threatening Washington's ability not only to compete for new business, but also to maintain the thriving trade infrastructure we have worked so hard to build.

First, significant changes in how the state conducts environmental reviews under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) will have damaging long-term consequences for many Washington industries, and particularly our trade-related businesses and workforce. Altering the state's long-standing regulatory review process to include a new global review increases uncertainty for businesses and communities and threatens major trade investments. The dangerous precedent this regulatory maze threatens to create for business in the state will deter the very investors we need here in Washington to sustain economic growth, enhance vital trade infrastructure and remain competitive.

Second, as demands for improved water-quality standards and rulemakings proceed here in Washington, the state must be mindful that further expansion of authority for agency regulators would threaten thousands of jobs. Washington has already adopted some of most stringent environmental regulations in the country. Overly aggressive and arbitrary rules would hurt not only prospective business, but would also create huge regulatory barriers for companies currently operating in the state that already are meeting — and in many cases exceeding — environmental standards for responsible corporate stewardship.

We must not indiscriminately increase the regulatory burdens of operators within Washington who are the backbone of our economy. By taking action on common-ground solutions that benefit all trade-related industries, we're securing the next generation of Washington's global brands. It is important for us to act now and support infrastructure investment so that these opportunities can ultimately improve the job and trade capacities of the region.

We understand the complexity of finding responsible solutions to our infrastructure woes and harmonizing solutions to benefit the larger system. However, growth opportunities for our trade-related businesses and the family-wage jobs they support in Washington will continue to increase if our administration sets up a system that encourages companies to invest in our state's trade infrastructure. We urge you to support policies that promote — and don't impede — Washington competitiveness.

We look forward to collaborating with you on these important matters.

Sincerely,

**Senator Mike Hewitt**

*(R-Walla Walla, 16th District)*

**Senator Tim Sheldon**

*(D-Potlatch, 35th District)*

**Rep. Brian Blake**

*(D-Aberdeen, 19<sup>th</sup> District)*

**Rep. Susan Fagan**

*(R-Pullman, 9th District)*

**Rep. Luanne Van Werven**

*(R-Lynden, 42nd District)*

**Bill Bryant**

*Commissioner, Port of Seattle*

---

**Larry Brown**

*International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers, Local 751*

**Steve Cooper**

*2nd Vice President, Washington Farm Bureau*

**Patrick Connor**

*Washington National Federation of Independent Businesses (NFIB)*

**Mike Elliott**

*Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen*

**Aaron Golladay**

*1st Vice President, Washington Farm Bureau*

**Kris Johnson**

*President, Association of Washington Business*

**Herb Krohn**

*SMART*

**Mike LaPlant**

*President, Washington Farm Bureau*

**Lee Newgent**

*Executive Director, Washington State Building Trades Council, AFL-CIO*

**Northwest Washington Building & Construction Trades Council AFL-CIO**

**Brad Owens**

*NW Jobs Alliance*

**Eric Schinfeld**

*President, Washington Council on International Trade*

**Steve Simmons**

*Country Gentleman Restaurant*

**John Stuhlmiller**

*CEO, Washington Farm Bureau*