



Keep Washington Competitive Newsletter

March 2015

With about a month left to go in the 2015 legislative session, activity continues on topics of interest to our membership. Included below you'll find information and links to news on a variety of topics related to Keep Washington Competitive. You are invited to circulate this update to your membership so they can stay informed. Have a news item, event or feedback to share? Please contact us at info@keepwashingtoncompetitive.com.

Competitiveness

On March 12 in Olympia, Keep Washington Competitive hosted the launch of the "Competitiveness Caucus" – Republican and Democratic lawmakers uniting to focus on issues that will protect and enhance Washington state's competitiveness in global trade. Co-chairs for the new Competitiveness Caucus include Senate co-chairs Mike Hewitt, R-Walla Walla, Tim Sheldon, D-Potlatch and House co-chairs Brian Blake, D-Aberdeen, and Susan Fagan, R-Pullman.



As leaders of the new Caucus, they will maintain focus on the state's regulatory environment and trade growth. Members of the Caucus also delivered a letter to Gov. Inslee signed by representatives of business, labor, agriculture and trade highlighting regulatory and trade issues in Washington state. To view the letter, [click here](#). A video of the entire press conference is available online [here](#), and individual remarks are also available from KWC Advisory Board Members [Larry Brown](#) and [Kris Johnson](#), as well as Competitiveness Caucus House Co-Chairs [Reps. Susan Fagan and Brian Blake](#).

The event was highlighted in the Association of Washington Business' "Fast Facts" online newsletter, [The NW Daily Marker](#), [Fox 14 News](#) (affiliate in Joplin, KS), and the Washington Farm Bureau's [blog](#) and [Facebook](#) page. Bill Bryant, Seattle Port Commissioner, also discussed the event on the [David Boze Show](#).

The Olympian published a joint op-ed by Jay Timmons, President of the National Association of Manufacturers and Kris Johnson, President of the Association of Washington Business focusing on the contribution manufacturing plays to economic recovery, and the importance of ensuring future competitiveness. "Manufacturing in America, not just through the products it makes but also the communities it supports, is a crucial driver of the domestic economy....In Washington state alone, the manufacturing sector supports nearly a million jobs. It is critical that our policymakers — in the halls of Congress and in Olympia — foster an environment that keeps our manufacturers, and our economy as a whole, competitive on a global scale." The piece also ran in [The Bellingham Herald](#) and [The NW Daily Marker](#). Read more [here](#).

Rep. Susan Fagan had an op-ed published in [The Bellingham Herald](#) and [The Tri-City Herald](#) that focuses on the vital contributions Washington's agriculture community makes to our economy and the need for ongoing infrastructure investment. She writes, in part: "A healthy trade economy opens Washington to new opportunities to reach expanding global markets....More than \$15.1 billion in food and agricultural products were exported via Washington's rail and port system in 2013, the third largest total in the U.S. With the availability of new markets, increased private investment in vital trade infrastructure will follow." Read more [here](#).

Finally, an op-ed by State Senators Mike Hewitt and Tim Sheldon was published in the [Walla Walla Union Bulletin](#) this week calling on state lawmakers to keep Washington competitive by fostering a regulatory environment that grows the economy and jobs. The piece states, "It's time for Republicans and Democrats, labor, business and agricultural groups alike to work together and get serious about our state's broader business climate. We need to take steps now to make our state more competitive in order to retain existing employers and recruit new businesses who would consider investment in Washington." Read more [here](#).

Keep Washington Competitive is a coalition of business, labor, agriculture, and trade organizations and leaders, joined together to promote bi-lateral trade growth in Washington State through sound state policies.

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