



Keep Washington Competitive Newsletter

May 2015

With the 2015 legislative special session and other newsworthy developments, 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. Also, KWC is now on Twitter: (@KWC_Trade). Please follow us, and share this with your colleagues interested in trade and competitiveness issues. Have a news item, event or feedback to share? Contact us at info@keepwashingtoncompetitive.com.

Competitiveness

In mid-May, Keep Washington Competitive had the opportunity to share its message and mission with more than 200 attendees at the AWB Spring Meeting in Spokane, Washington. Steve Simmons, a member of both AWB and KWC, provided brief remarks about KWC and the Competitiveness Caucus.

The remarks were given just prior to a legislative panel with Sens. Andy Billig and Michael Baumgartner, as well as Reps. Shelly Short and Larry Springer. Print materials were also distributed to attendees. During the AWB Board Meeting on May 13, AWB President Kris Johnson included comments on AWB's involvement in – and support for – KWC as part of his report to the board. Johnson's comments underscored the value and importance of KWC as a voice for jobs and private employers.

The Washington Examiner and Washington State Wire carried a piece by John Burnett, a financial services executive with over 20 years of experience in risk management, operations, governance and compliance, who looks at the importance of infrastructure investment to competitiveness, and the importance of not hindering such activity.



Burnett writes: "Even as the energy sector helps propel the nation's economic resurgence with billions of dollars of investment in new project and technologies, it is facing hurdles in

an unlikely quarter: states with economies that depend on a strong energy sector. In two states with large stakes in the energy industry — Alaska and Washington — governors who could reap great benefits from partnering with energy companies are instead working to undermine them at a time when the nation's economy is still fragile." Read the full piece [here](#).

The Daily News editorial board writes on the merger of the Ports of Tacoma and Seattle – the "Seaport Alliance" – describing the move as good for Washington state. The Board also notes how expansion to meet shipping demand at the Port of Longview should be considered: *"For any port to be competitive it must provide clients with the most efficient route possible to the end destination. To maximize efficiency and compete in today's market, ports must have the right types of docks and on-site equipment for handling cargo. Ideally, a port would offer ready access to both rail service and an interstate highway. Quick and easy access equals low cost to shippers."* Read the full piece [here](#).

The Oregonian published a guest column by John Martin, President of GeoTech Foundation Company in Hillsboro, Oregon, offers important perspective on the renewable energy conversation, and the elements of a comprehensive energy plan: *"...lost in the recent conversation about the future of energy usage was the notion that renewables are still a small part of a comprehensive energy strategy, especially in growing Asian economies. Until the technology catches up and becomes more readily available to communities around the world, energy portfolios will remain diverse and reliant on traditional fossil fuels to generate electricity. Given the Northwest's geography of naturally deep-water ports and existing infrastructure, we shouldn't turn our backs on an opportunity to responsibly export energy commodities such as low-sulfur coal from our neighbors in Montana and Wyoming. These exports create thousands of regional jobs."* Read the full column [here](#).

This month, the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee approved funding for a critical provision that would reform the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund and significantly benefit the ports of Tacoma and Seattle, with the leadership of Rep. and Sen. Patty Murray. Murray said: *"Ports are the lifeblood of the Washington state economy, and so I was proud to work with my colleagues to make sure this bill works for Washington state workers and the economy. I will keep working to make sure the ports of Seattle and Tacoma get the resources they need to make infrastructure improvements and retain a competitive edge over ports in Canada and Mexico, which is critical to the entire U.S. economy."* Read more [here](#).

Former Longview City Manager Bob Gregory applauded the Port of Longview for its effort to rebrand and remain competitive in today's global economy. Gregory writes, in part: *"Washington is one of the most trade-dependent states in the country, and Longview — while a seemingly small part of that footprint — has an important stake in this global market."* Read the full letter [here](#).

This month, Larry Brown, Legislative Director for the Machinist Union IAM District 751, was honored as Maritime Person of the Year by the Maritime Trades Department, Puget Sound Ports Council, AFL-CIO.



The award was presented by two other KWC Board members Vince O'Halloran and Gordon Baxter who are president and vice president respectively of the Maritime Trades Puget Sound Ports Council.

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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