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For Immediate Release

December 21, 2012

Governor Kitzhaber sends letter to the Administration in support of small ports

Yesterday, Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber submitted a letter to the Obama Administration in support of small coastal ports. The letter highlights the vital role small ports play in the economic development of their communities, and calls attention to the growing need for funding to maintain navigation channels providing access to these critical ports and harbors. Governor Kitzhaber's message reinforces the sentiments sent to President Obama in late November by Rep. Peter DeFazio (OR), Sen. Ron Wyden (OR), Sen. Jeff Merkley (OR), Rep. Kurt Schrader (OR) and Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler (WA).

Northwest small ports, their tenants, and supporting businesses are providing family wage jobs and economic development activity in communities which are struggling to achieve an economic recovery. Despite the important role they play in our region and nation, their affiliated federal navigation channels and jetties remain vastly underfunded. In FY2013, most of the small ports on the Oregon and Washington coasts were zeroed out in the Administration's budget. Now that we've entered the second year without earmarks, the pain is starting to set in. In their FY2012 and FY2013 Energy & Water Appropriations bills, both the House and Senate recognized this lack of funding and included \$30M of additional Operations & Maintenance (O&M) funding specifically for small ports. In their FY2013 bills, Congress also included language directing the Office of Management & Budget (OMB), the arm of the Administration that writes the budget, to provide more robust funding for our nation's small ports.

This letter is a great show of additional support from Governor Kitzhaber and reinforces the needs of our small ports. Direct funding in the President's FY2014 budget, which will be released in February 2013, would ensure that these Northwest projects receive federal funding in the next fiscal year. PNWA applauds this effort by Governor Kitzhaber to stand up for the needs of small ports in the Northwest.

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About PNWA: The Pacific Northwest Waterways Association (PNWA) is a non-profit trade association that advocates for federal policies and funding in support of regional economic and environmental sustainability. PNWA represents multiple industries in the public and private sectors in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and California. Members include public ports, navigation, transportation, international trade, tourism, agriculture, forest products, energy and local government interests. Since its founding in 1934, PNWA led the way for development of economic infrastructure for navigation, electric power and irrigated agriculture on the Columbia and Snake River System. In 1971, PNWA expanded, adding Puget Sound and coastal port members to provide a comprehensive regional perspective. Today, PNWA works with the U.S. Congress, federal agencies and regional decision leaders on transportation, trade, tourism, energy and environmental policy to enhance economic vitality in the Pacific Northwest. You can learn more about PNWA at www.pnwa.net.