

Save Lives, Improve Air Quality, and Reduce Climate Pollution at Washington's Ports

Pass HB 1689

At Washington's ports, the status quo is unsustainable.

The Ports of Seattle and Tacoma – the third largest container complex in North America – saw visits from 1,700 cargo vessels in 2023¹. These types of vessels spew thousands of tons of NOx and diesel particulate matter (DPM) into the environment², endangering our oceans, air quality, and the health of port workers and nearby communities. Rates of cancer, cardiovascular and respiratory issues, and premature death all increase due to these noxious emissions.

Shore Power is a more sustainable way.

Washington can become a national leader in the sustainable shipping revolution by enacting shore power at our ports – the largest locally controlled public port system in the world³. Instead of idling their engines while at port, ocean-going vessels such as cargo vessels and cruise ships can plug in to clean, sustainable electricity while at port – which the Washington Department of Commerce urged the state to explore in its 2024 Transportation Electrification Strategy. **We need more eco-friendly ports throughout the state.**

HB 1689 is how we get there. It will direct the Department of Ecology to:

Drive immediate environmental benefits to Washington's waters, air, and infrastructure

Improve the health of Washingtonians and even save lives

Create jobs and help communities thrive

Meet Washington's sustainability goals



¹ The Northwest Seaport Alliance.

² Puget Sound Maritime Air Forum.

³ Washington Ports.

Washington is making progress on reducing emissions at port by appropriating tens of millions of dollars for port electrification and expanding shore power installation - including for the Northwest Seaport Alliance and Puyallup Tribe and at the ports of Anacortes, Bellingham, and Everett – but the state must use the full extent of its legal authority to accelerate shore power utilization.

HB 1689 will direct the Department of Ecology to adopt a statewide shore power policy that ensures any terminal seeing more than 20 vessel visits per year from certain vessel types provides shore power. The bill will accelerate shore power installation across the state while taking into account issues of technical feasibility and cost considerations – focusing on the largest ports without burdening smaller ones.

▶ **Electrification will have immediate environmental impacts.**

When a ship is docked for 40 hours plugged into shore power, it saves 32 tons of CO2 and 22 pounds of toxic diesel particulate matter from being released into the air⁴. Full use of shore power at the Port of Seattle will reduce the emission of PM 2.5 – which causes cardiovascular disease, asthma, and low birth weight – by 29%⁵.

▶ **Electrification is already saving lives elsewhere.**

In California, which has already adopted an electrification rule, shore power is expected to save 237 lives⁶, save \$2.31 billion in public health expenses, and reduce carbon dioxide-equivalent emissions by 356,000 metric tons.

▶ **Electrification is a job creator and helps communities thrive.**

Right now, Washington’s port workers are breathing polluted air at work, and Washingtonians who live next to ports are exposed to serious health risks through no fault of their own⁷. Instituting shore power can create high-paying union jobs – like the construction of shore power at Port of Tacoma’s TOTE terminal, which created dozens of manufacturing and installation jobs⁸. And after shore power is installed, our port workers will have safer, cleaner air to breathe on the job.

▶ **Shore power is how we meet Washington’s ambitious sustainability goals.**

Our ferries will be all converted to hybrid-electric power in 15 years – and our entire state is committed to reaching net-zero emissions by 2050. But because our ports are some of the largest and most active in the world, we cannot achieve this crucial goal to combat climate change without instituting shore power.

⁴ The Northwest Sea Port Alliance.

⁵ International Council on Clean Transportation.

⁶ California Air Resources Board.

⁷ Washington State Department of Health.

⁸ Port of Tacoma.

For more, visit www.pacificenvironment.org/shore-power-for-cleaner-washington-ports/.

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