



# 2025 Pacific Northwest

## SHARED FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA

The Portland Metro Chamber and Seattle Metro Chamber share advocacy priorities for addressing policy and funding challenges in the two largest urban centers in the Pacific Northwest. We share these priorities with our Cascadia Innovation Corridor partner, the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade.

This combined federal agenda calls for prioritizing the Pacific Northwest and Cascadia Region to accelerate continued progress in recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. These priorities will make our regional economies more resilient by helping small businesses grow, keeping commerce moving, producing more housing, and making communities safer, all while supporting the necessary workforce and global market access for our large, traded-sector employers to succeed.

## Transportation & Infrastructure

Transportation and port infrastructure are critical to maintaining our region's international competitiveness. We ask the Federal Government to invest in maintaining the region's transportation infrastructure including Interstate-5 and the I-5 Bridge Replacement; preserve support from the Federal Transit Administration to expand the capacity of our local transportation system with projects like Sound Transit Phase 3; and strengthen international commerce and mobility along the Cascadia Corridor through investments in port capacity and new enterprises like high-speed rail.

## Top Policy Priorities

- Keep commerce and people moving safely in the Pacific Northwest.

Maintain federal commitments to community health, education, parks, forests, housing, and research.

Keep our economies strong by:

- Promoting policies that expand, rather than restrict, access to global markets;
  - Maintaining competitive tax rates that encourage business investment and economic growth.
  - Slowing the rapid growth in the cost of living for consumers.
  - Immigration reform that addresses constraints to legal immigration to address historic workforce shortages.
- Increase access to affordable housing and homeless services.
  - Continue to address the fentanyl and opioid addiction crises.



GREATER VANCOUVER  
BOARD OF TRADE

**REQUEST:** Advocate for continued federal partnership to deliver on the critical I-5 Bridge Replacement and Rose Quarter Improvement projects. Both are located in the Portland Metro area, but are essential to the flow of goods and people along the entire west coast.

**REQUEST:** Advocate for continued partnership in the Cascadia High Speed Rail initiative and additional investments in the Cascades Corridor, particularly for the preservation of Portland's historic Union Station. The public and private sector continue to seek \$200 million in federal funding, including the Federal Railroad Administration's multiple passenger rail funding programs. To meet the 20% (or \$50 million) non-federal match, the City of Portland is investing \$15M and needs approximately \$30M-\$35M total from the State of Oregon and State of Washington to demonstrate local commitment to the project.

**REQUEST:** Continue federal partnership to enhance the Puget Sound's ferry systems in the Seattle Metro region.

## Housing Production

The Cascadia Region continues to face a historic housing supply crisis weighed down by high interest rates, cumbersome permitting processes, rising material costs, and over regulation.

**REQUEST:** We ask the Federal Government to increase investments to allow greater access to emergency shelter and affordable workforce housing. Additionally, we request that the Federal Government recognize that the current permitting and regulatory system is broken and support policies that will modernize our permitting process. Permitting reform should focus on the following principles:

- **Predictability** – Project developers and financiers must have an appropriate level of certainty regarding the scope and timeline for project reviews, including any related judicial review.
- **Efficiency** – Inter-agency coordination must be improved to optimize public and private resources while driving better environmental and community outcomes.
- **Transparency** – Project sponsors and the public must have visibility into the project permitting milestones and schedule through an easily accessible public means.
- **Stakeholder Input** – All relevant stakeholders must be adequately informed and have the opportunity to provide input within a reasonable and consistent time frame.

**REQUEST:** Support funding requests for transformative development projects that will produce thousands of units of much-needed housing in the Central City, such as OMSI District and the former federal post office/Broadway Corridor projects.

## Public Safety

### Reduce organized retail theft and slow the fentanyl crisis

The Pacific Northwest has some of the highest incidences of organized retail crime in the nation. Law enforcement agencies are struggling with staffing and capacity to address nonviolent crimes. Furthermore, the Cascadia Region continues to be impacted by the interrelated opioid/fentanyl and behavioral health crises.

**REQUEST:** We ask the Federal Government to support our state and local public safety needs by investing in law enforcement partnerships, recruitment and retention, and increased capacity to combat organized retail crime and its impacts on our local business community. We specifically support the "Combating Organized Retail Crime Act" of 2023 (S.140/H.R. 895) and urge its reintroduction and passage in the 119th Congress.

**REQUEST:** Continue to increase federal investments to reduce opioid supply and expand our behavioral health systems by increasing providers, access to recovery beds, and access to rehabilitation services.

## **Immigration Reform**

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The Pacific Northwest employers of all sizes and across all industries are facing chronic workforce shortages that significantly limit the ability of businesses to grow and meet current demand. The shortcomings of our legal immigration system are a key contributing factor to employers' struggles to hire and retain the talent they need to succeed in an increasingly competitive global marketplace.

As demand for workers has increased in recent years, the outdated and arbitrarily low visa quotas, onerous compliance burdens, decades-long backlogs, and obsolete eligibility requirements that pervade employment-based visa programs leave many companies out in the cold when it comes to adequately meeting their workforce needs.

**REQUEST:** We ask the Federal Government to finally enact federal immigration reform by supporting policies that will spur economic growth, support our nation's workforce, and boost job creation. The goal should be to implement long-term fixes to our broken immigration system that address the artificial constraints on legal immigration.

## **Economic Development**

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- Pro-Growth Tax Policies
- Access to Global Markets
- Workforce

Pacific Northwest companies among the most competitive businesses in the global economy, making stable international trade vital to the region's economy. International trade supports nearly 1 million jobs in Washington State. A new report on the State of International Trade to Oregon found that 1 in 8 Oregon jobs are connected to trade and 9% of the state's GDP is attributable to exports. And though the Pacific Northwest is home to some of our nation's export giants, 88% of export activity is from small and medium-sized companies. Punitive tariffs pose a grave threat to the Pacific Northwest economy and the success of employers of all sizes, especially small businesses.

The Oregon Business Plan and Seattle Metro Chamber support H. Con. Res. 14, which would provide the clearest path for permanent extension of the pro-growth provisions in the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA). It also provides a framework to responsibly reduce government spending, and we urge its swift passage. We urge all members to vote in favor of H. Con. Res. 14 to secure permanent, pro-growth tax relief to drive innovation and investment so that American workers, businesses, and communities can continue to thrive. Without passage, a majority of Americans will face steep tax increases next year. We also urge the Pacific Northwest delegations to continue to support full restoration of the State and Local Tax deduction (SALT) as has been proposed by members of the majority. The \$10,000 cap on SALT represented one of the largest federal tax increases on Oregonians in history.

We encourage our delegations to protect the following programs in budget reconciliation; programs that support housing production like Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and HOME investment partnership; the Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC); tax exempt status of municipal bonds which are crucial to funding major infrastructure projects.

**REQUEST:** We ask the Federal Government to oppose punitive tariffs and any international trade policy that threatens the health of our industries dependent on the global supply chain.

**REQUEST:** We ask the Federal Government to continue supporting workforce development in our region's top industries, such as aerospace, manufacturing, athletic and outdoor apparel, and technology, to ensure the region's companies remain internationally competitive.

**REQUEST:** We seek continued support for tax policies that encourage business investment, growth, and regional competitiveness by endorsing H. Con. Res. 14.

**REQUEST:** Protect critical programs to spur housing production, low income housing and financing major infrastructure projects.

## Affordable & Accessible Childcare

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The lack of affordable childcare across the Pacific Northwest significantly affects businesses by limiting workforce participation, increasing turnover rates, driving up recruitment and training costs, and reducing the talent pool, making it harder for businesses to grow.

**REQUEST:** We ask the Federal Government increase investments in state childcare subsidy programs (CCDBG) to match market rate and grant programs that directly support childcare providers, increase funding for the Child Care Development Fund, and renew the \$24B investment in the childcare industry, originally through the Child Care & Development Block Grant program.

## Support for Research, National Parks, Forests, and a World-Class Education System

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The Pacific Northwest is home to cutting-edge, world-class, research-driven, post-secondary education institutions. Oregon and Washington are also responsible for the preservation of many of our nation's most important national parks, waterways and forests.

**REQUEST:** We ask the Federal Government to carefully consider the trade-offs and potential outcomes of proposed investment and ensure that they do not result in economic harm or a less productive and competitive workforce.

