
ENGROSSED SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8008

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2017 Regular Session

By Senator Chase

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1 TO THE HONORABLE DONALD TRUMP, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,
2 AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF
3 REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
4 THE UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED:

5 We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of
6 the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled,
7 respectfully represent and petition as follows:

8 WHEREAS, The federal harbor maintenance tax is assessed on the
9 value of goods being shipped into United States ports; and

10 WHEREAS, The harbor maintenance tax is not collected on trans-
11 pacific cargo shipped to the United States via rail or roads from
12 ports in Mexico and Canada; and

13 WHEREAS, The ability to move trans-pacific cargo through Canadian
14 ports and avoid paying the harbor maintenance tax is an incentive to
15 divert cargo away from United States ports; and

16 WHEREAS, The federal maritime commission inquiry into the harbor
17 maintenance tax found that up to half of United States bound
18 containers coming into Canada's west coast ports could revert to
19 using United States west coast ports if United States importers were
20 relieved from paying the tax; and

21 WHEREAS, Current United States law does not require the revenues
22 raised through the harbor maintenance tax to be fully spent on harbor
23 maintenance related investments, collections have far exceeded fund

1 appropriation and surplus collections will grow to over nine billion
2 dollars this year; and

3 WHEREAS, Revenue raised through the harbor maintenance tax pays
4 for dredging and other maintenance costs, with significant amounts
5 being spent for dredging at east coast, Gulf, and Columbia River
6 ports; and

7 WHEREAS, Certain deep water ports on the west coast that require
8 no or little dredging, including the new Northwest Seaport Alliance
9 consisting of the ports of Seattle and Tacoma, receive just over a
10 penny on every dollar of harbor maintenance tax paid by shippers who
11 use their ports; and

12 WHEREAS, The Columbia river channel is critical to maintain
13 global trade and the port of Vancouver USA serves as the largest
14 wheat export gateway in the nation; and

15 WHEREAS, With the recent widening of the Panama Canal and
16 potential addition of a canal in Nicaragua, Washington ports face
17 increasing competition for maritime goods bound for the United
18 States; and

19 WHEREAS, Washington ports are ready to compete on a level playing
20 field to efficiently move goods to market;

21 NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that:

22 (1) Congress pass and the president sign legislation reforming
23 the harbor maintenance tax; and

24 (2) Such legislation ensures that United States tax policy does
25 not disadvantage United States ports and maritime cargo, strives to
26 have all navigation channels including the Columbia River be fully
27 maintained, and provides greater equity for harbor maintenance tax
28 donor ports through expanded uses of the harbor maintenance revenues
29 to meet all Northwest port needs.

30 BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately
31 transmitted to the Honorable Donald Trump, President of the United
32 States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the
33 House of Representatives, and each member of Congress from the State
34 of Washington.

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