



Washington Council on International Trade

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WCIT Thanks Senators Murray and Cantwell and Representative Reichert for Leading the Way on Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) Reform

Seattle – Thursday, Senators Murray and Cantwell along with Representative Reichert introduced the bipartisan Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund Reform Act of 2017. This bill ensures that funds collected through the Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) are returned to local ports to support infrastructure improvements and maintain the competitiveness of Washington’s global gateways. WCIT and its members – manufacturers, retailers, service providers and farmers across Washington state – thank these congressional leaders as well as the co-sponsors from Washington’s delegation, Representatives Smith, Larsen, DeBene, Heck, Kilmer and Jayapal, for efforts to reform the HMTF and applaud their dedication to prioritizing our vital maritime industry.

“The HMT has long disadvantaged Washington ports by diverting cargo to Canadian ports and failing to return critical funds for port infrastructure investment,” said Lori Otto Punke, President of WCIT. “This bill would ensure HMTF funds are fully allocated to donor ports and small ports to support their needs while providing rebates to shippers to discourage cargo diversion.

“When we operate at a competitive disadvantage, we lose cargo and ship calls. This is detrimental to Washington state’s 146,000 maritime and transportation jobs, as well as vessel and container capacity that enable Washington farmers and manufacturers to export. We are fortunate to have a congressional delegation that understands the importance of strengthening our ports, and we would like to thank them for leading on this issue.”

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About the Washington Council on International Trade

WCIT is the only organization in Washington dedicated exclusively to advocating for public policies that increase our state's international competitiveness. On behalf of its members — manufacturers, farmers, retailers and service providers – WCIT advocates for trade policies and investments that benefit Washington's workers and employers.

WCIT works to:

- **Evaluate** and share objective data on the impact of trade policies on Washington’s economy
- **Educate** our local, state and federal elected officials about the benefits of strong international trade policies and investments to Washington employers and residents
- **Engage** diverse stakeholders from across the state – including manufacturers, retailers, farmers and service providers - to drive policy changes that help them succeed in the global marketplace

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