

OREGON INTERNATIONAL PORT OF COOS BAY

Coos Bay, Oregon

REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

11:00 a.m., Thursday, February 20, 2025

Port Commission Chambers, 125 Central Avenue, Suite 230, Coos Bay, Oregon 97420

ATTENDANCE

Commission:

Kyle Stevens, President; Nick Edwards, Vice President; Elise Hamner, Secretary; and Arnie Roblan, Commissioner. Kyle ViksneHill, Treasurer, was excused.

Staff:

Lanelle Comstock, Chief Executive Officer; Melissa Cribbins, PCIP Executive Director; Megan Richardson, Director of Finance and Accounting; Matt Friesen, Director of External Affairs; Rick Adamek, Director of Asset Management; Brian Early, General Manager, Coos Bay Rail Line; Ray Dwire, Charleston Marina Manager; Krystal Karcher, Administrative Services Manager; and Jennifer Sierra, Administrative Assistant.

Media & Guests:

Franziska Elliott, JLA Public Involvement; Garth Johnson, ILWU; Tallon Trentz, IUOE Local 701; Aaron Simons, ILWU; Roger Morgan, KLJN; Brad Coleman, ILWU; Frank Williams; Jan Hodder; George Walberg; Patrick Momsen; Christine Moffitt; and Jamie Fereday.

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

President Stevens called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

2. INTRODUCTION OF COMMISSIONERS, GUESTS AND PORT STAFF

3. PORT PROJECT UPDATE

A. Charleston Marina RV Park Project Update by Ray Dwire

Mr. Dwire reported that the RV Park generated \$365K in revenue for FY 23/24, reflecting a 16% increase due to higher visitor numbers. This figure does not account for additional indirect revenue from moorage slips, storage units, dry storage, boat launches, and other community purchases. Mr. Dwire emphasized the RV Park's critical role in the Port's budget and overall revenue, underscoring the importance of ongoing upkeep and maintenance.

At the Charleston Advisory Committee Meeting held on July 17, 2024, several necessary improvements were identified for the RV Park. There were concerns raised regarding poor lawn maintenance, faded signage, and general upkeep issues. During a follow-up inspection on January 9, Mr. Dunning, Mr. Dwire, and Ms. Williams identified several key maintenance priorities, that included:

General Maintenance – Immediate low-cost fixes such as pressure washing, repainting buildings, repairing cracks in asphalt, re-stripping, flowers at the entrance, and restroom/shower upgrades.

Moderate-Cost Repairs – Included replacing damaged window seals and eaves, maintaining yurt ramps and porches, and considering porch roofs for two yurts, depending on the budget.

Capital Improvements – Long-term projects such as upgrading electrical panels, replacing perimeter fencing and gates, possibly refurbishing the mural, and assessing asphalt repairs.

Additional concerns included replacing picnic tables with more weather-resistant materials and ensuring that electrical pedestals meet current standards. While a grant was secured to reseal the Marina boat ramp parking lot, funding for the RV Park parking lot remains uncertain. The Marina is evaluating all areas to identify necessary improvements for both the RV Park and Shipyard.

Commissioner Stevens inquired about the construction year of the RV Park, to which Mr. Dwire responded that he would need to gather more information. Commissioner Stevens also asked whether replacing pedestals would require additional permits or if they could be swapped out. Mr. Dwire stated that he would need to investigate further.

Mr. Dwire noted that Thomas Morton, who oversees Purchasing and Procurement, has inventoried the pedestals at both the RV Park and the docks. He explained that due to the cost of \$1,600 per pedestal, bulk purchases are not feasible. Instead, they have implemented a standing order to replace five pedestals at a time. Regarding the RV Park, Mr. Dwire acknowledged that infrastructure updates have been considered for years but have not yet been implemented. Commissioner Stevens pointed out that pedestal spacing requirements have changed over the past 25 years and questioned whether updates would necessitate additional considerations. Mr. Dwire indicated that major restructuring would likely require electrical permits, which would need further review.

Commissioner Hamner emphasized the significance of the work being done at the RV Park, highlighting that it enhances the park's appeal and relevance, making it a more attractive destination. Commissioner Hamner praised Mr. Dwire's contributions in aligning with the Strategic Plan. Ms. Comstock stated that the RV Park rehabilitation is a top priority and would provide regular updates, including photos, as the work progresses.

B. Port Financial Update by Megan Richardson

Ms. Richardson presented the financial review for December 2024. The operating income in the general fund totaled \$235K, compared to a budgeted \$356K, resulting in a shortfall of \$121K. Administration had a shortfall of approximately \$3K primarily due to vacant space in the Hub Building. The budget had assumed full tenancy, leading to a year-to-date shortfall of around \$20K. Port Operations saw an excess revenue of about \$3K, attributed to an unplanned dock lease at the Terminal One facility. Year-to-date, this lease generated approximately \$10K in additional revenue.

Rail Ops experienced a \$65K shortfall for the month of December. The three main revenue sources for Rail Ops are the management fee from CBRL to the Port, Port surcharges, and rail leases. The management fee and surcharges depend on the number of carloads moved each month. December's budget projected 600 carloads, but actual figures came in at 347, reducing revenue in these areas.

For the Charleston Revenue, shortfalls were recorded across business lines due to seasonal downturns, resulting in a \$55K deficit for the month. Year-to-date, Charleston revenue has a total shortfall of approximately \$103K.

Total operating expenses for December were \$537K, compared to a budget of \$606K, representing a \$69K underspend. Most departments had a favorable expense-to-budget ratio, except for Rail Ops, which exceeded budget due to emergency bridge repairs on the North Bend Swing Span Bridge.

The total operating loss for December was \$301K, exceeding the budgeted loss of \$250K by \$51K. This greater-than-expected loss is attributed to lower revenue and higher expenses in the Rail Ops Department. Total Other Income in December saw a total of \$390K, falling short of the budgeted \$555K by \$165K. This shortfall resulted from the timing of property tax collections; a payment expected in December was instead received in November, shifting revenue between months. Year-to-date, property tax revenue remains on budget.

Other Income includes transfers from the dredge fund, public records request fees, and payments for damages to the Port facilities. Other Expenses totaled \$23K against a budgeted \$101K, leading to an underspend of \$78K. Debt Services appeared high due to a budget allocation issue but overall remains on track for the fiscal year. December Net Result was a gain of \$66K compared to a budgeted net gain of \$204K, resulting in a shortfall of \$138K. Year-to-Date Net Result (July-December) is a net gain of \$793K versus a budgeted net gain of \$375K, exceeding expectations by \$418K. This includes a \$405K contribution from the sale of three surplus locomotives.

Overall, while December's financial performance reflected some revenue shortfalls, particularly in Rail Ops and Charleston operations, the year-to-date figures remain strong, primarily due to the locomotive sales and cost savings in several departments.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

A. Aaron Simons, a former Port employee, who is presently with ILWU Local 12, stated that the Union asked him to convey their support for the container terminal, and added that some of the Union officers from San Francisco met with Val Hoyle and other representatives in Washington, D.C. Their main request was to explore the possibility of working with the Port and Melissa Cribbins to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Once an MOU is established, it could be reviewed by the Union, which may then consider issuing a letter of support. Additionally, Mr. Simons shared his observations from a visit to Charleston, where he met with Mr. Dwire and assessed the current conditions. He noted that the area, including the RV Park and Marina, are in disrepair. The docks are deteriorating due to a lack of maintenance. To him, it seemed that other projects, such as dredging in Garibaldi, were being prioritized instead. Furthermore, he highlighted staffing shortages, with no backfill for vacant positions. Mr. Simons urged the Port to address these issues by replenishing staff and allocating resources to necessary maintenance and infrastructure improvements, if funding is available.

B. Frank Williams, a retired longshoreman, became involved with Community Access Television (PEG TV), producing shows under the theme 'Build docks, and they will come,' though he is still waiting for the docks to materialize. In the past, he traveled to Salem to advocate for the replacement of the Port Commission, with the goal of accelerating dock development, but saw little progress. He recalled a meeting with the previous Port manager where an engineer was consulted on rail-to-dock infrastructure. Mr. Williams also noted that during Ken Messerle's time in Salem, he learned that increasing tunnel clearances could facilitate piggybacking on railroads.

Mr. Williams explained that since he does not have a computer, the only way to get updates from the Port is by attending meetings. Mr. Williams provided some historical context, explaining that the bay

at one time had 300 ships coming and going during high tide, whereas today, that number has dwindled to only 50 or 60. Mr. Williams originally went to Salem because shipping activity had declined drastically, and despite all efforts, there has been little improvement. He wanted to know, now that a Republican Administration is in office, if the Port had secured the state funding of \$29M for shipping expansion.

Mr. Williams expressed frustration over time limits on public comments and questioned if the Commissioners would address his concerns. Commissioner Stevens clarified that public comment sessions are not for discussions but assured him his questions would be answered in the presentation. Mr. Williams also voiced disappointment that he and Roger Morgan never received a response from Ms. Comstock regarding a meeting request, stating he should not have to attend Port meetings for basic information.

Mr. Williams asked the Commissioners directly whether shipping was part of the Port's plans and if the necessary funds were available. Commissioner Stevens confirmed that the Port has the funds but clarified that the Port itself is not a shipper. Mr. Williams stated that, as a taxpayer contributing \$16K annually, he is particularly concerned about how federal dollars—his tax money—are being allocated to the Port. He emphasized his desire for transparency regarding the use of these funds.

C. Roger Morgan, representing KLJN, attended the Commission meeting to express his enthusiasm for the Port of Coos Bay's developments, particularly the container project. He shared his 67-year journey in radio, which began in Salem and led him through various major markets before settling in Coos Bay eight years ago with BiCoastal Radio. Initially thinking his career was winding down, he now sees Coos Bay's growth as an exciting new chapter. As a local station owner, he is eager to support and promote the Port's efforts and welcomes ongoing collaboration with the Board of Commissioners.

D. Patrick Momsen, who was representing the Empire Association, presented on a packet he emailed to the Commissioners and which is attached to the end of these minutes, highlighting research on world ports and the challenges they posed to nearby residents. He referenced key findings from the packet, emphasizing concerns observed in ports across the United States and beyond. He stated that as the Pacific Coast Intermodal Port (PCIP) project continues to develop, residents of Empire are increasingly concerned about its environmental impacts. He believes that the project aims to enhance intermodal transportation efficiency, but there is little indication that the Port Commission will adequately address the pressing environmental challenges facing Empire and the broader Coos Bay community. Mr. Momsen has requested that, before the construction of the PCIP project begins, the Port clarify its plans for mitigating potential environmental impacts. Specifically, he seeks information on measures to protect marine life and water quality, as well as strategies for addressing noise and light pollution. Mr. Momsen noted that the report includes alternative solutions adopted by other ports worldwide and offers recommendations on how the Port could proceed. Mr. Momsen believes it is critical for the Port Commission to clearly outline its plans for addressing these concerns to ensure that the development of the PCIP project does not come at the expense of the health and well-being of Empire's residents.

E. Jan Hodder, followed up on a request she previously emailed to Ms. Comstock and Ms. Cribbins, seeking information on whether the Port has sponsored any legislation in the Oregon legislature or requested funds for Port operations. She emphasized that providing this information would help taxpayers understand the Port's funding priorities, as they have previously been left uninformed about such matters. Ms. Hodder appreciates the Commission's growing interest in public participation and

hopes this continues by keeping taxpayers informed. Ms. Hodder believes that transparency allows the public to engage with legislators, voice support, and express concerns regarding the Port's requests. Ms. Hodder specifically inquired about legislative support for projects such as the Charleston Shipyard, Point Adams shoaling, and making Terminal One usable. Additionally, she asked whether the Port plans to seek amendments to House Bill 3050 to facilitate these efforts. She urged the Port to share this information with residents so they can stay informed and continue to support its initiatives.

F. **Jamie Fereday**, read from written testimony, which is attached to the end of these minutes.

5. **CONSENT ITEMS**

- A. Approval of January 16, 2025 Regular Commission Meeting Minutes
- B. Approval of January Invoices
- C. Approval of January Contracts Awarded

Upon a motion by Commissioner Roblan (second by Commissioner Edwards), the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the January 16, 2025 Regular Commission Meeting Minutes, January Invoices and January Contracts Awarded. **Motion Passed Unanimously.** (Ayes: Stevens, Edwards, Hamner, and Roblan. Nays: None. Absent: ViksneHill).

6. **MANAGEMENT REPORTS**

All Management Reports were included within the Meeting Packet.

7. **ACTION ITEMS/REPORTS**

A. **Charleston Advisory Committee Member Appointments**

The Charleston Advisory Committee was established by the Board of Commissioners of the Oregon International Port of Coos Bay on September 17, 2003 to serve in an advisory capacity to the Port Commission in developing strategies and guidelines for various projects and issues concerning the Charleston Marina Complex. The function of the Committee includes but is not limited to:

- Review of proposed projects within or affecting the Charleston Marina, RV Park and Shipyard.
- Review and monitor project progress.
- Monitor and make recommendations to the Port Commission regarding various issues. Any recommendations or proposals submitted by the Committee shall be considered in an advisory nature, and shall be given due consideration by the Port Commission for feasibility and implementation.

The terms of Kathleen Hornstuen, Lou Leberti, and Knute Nemeth expired in January 2025. All three have agreed to continue serving on the Charleston Advisory Committee for another three-year term.

Port Staff recommend re-appointing Kathleen Hornstuen, Lou Leberti, and Knute Nemeth to the Charleston Advisory Committee.

Commissioner Edwards expressed gratitude to Mr. Nemeth, Ms. Hornstuen, and Mr. Leberti for their dedication and the time they have invested in the committee. After reviewing the minutes from the January 15 Charleston Advisory Committee meeting, he acknowledged the significant effort put into it

and encouraged anyone interested in the Marina to read the minutes for valuable insights. Commissioner Stevens also recommended attending the meetings, noting that the three individuals are highly active in the community.

Commissioner Hamner acknowledged the significant volunteer efforts of both Mr. Nemeth and Ms. Hornstuen, who have been actively involved in numerous events throughout Charleston over the years. Additionally, she highlighted Mr. Leberti's role on the Port's Budget Committee. Commissioner Hamner emphasized their commitment and active participation in representing the public. Commissioner Hamner expressed sincere appreciation for their contributions and hoped the community would continue to engage with them, recognizing their vital role as advocates for the constituents of Charleston.

Commissioner Roblan expressed his full agreement with everything that had been said. He mentioned that his wife had served as the principal at Charleston Elementary School for many years and had interacted with the three committee members. He acknowledged that it's a consistent group of individuals who deeply care about the area and are always willing to dedicate their time and effort toward making a positive impact. Commissioner Roblan concluded by offering his sincere thanks to everyone involved.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Hamner (second by Commissioner Roblan), the Board of Commissioners motioned to re-appoint Kathleen Hornstuen, Lou Leberti, and Knute Nemeth to the Charleston Advisory Committee for a three-year term, expiring January 31, 2028. **Motion Passed Unanimously.** (Ayes: Stevens, Edwards, Hamner, and Roblan. Nays: None. Absent: ViksneHill).

B. Seat Position on South Slough's Management Commission

Per ORS 273.554, the South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve created a Management Commission to:

- (a) Conduct the day-to-day operation and management of the reserve management area with the administrative support of the Department of State Lands;
- (b) Appoint a manager and other staff necessary to carry out this section; and
- (c) Apply for, receive and expend moneys.

The commission consists of nine members appointed by the Governor:

- (a) A representative of common schools in the area of the South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve;
- (b) One authorized representative of the Coos County Board of Commissioners;
- (c) One authorized representative of the governing body of the Oregon International Port of Coos Bay;
- (d) The Director of the Department of State Lands or a designee thereof;
- (e) One authorized representative of the federal Office for Coastal Management;
- (f) Two representatives with an interest in marine science, one from the University of Oregon Institute of Marine Biology at Charleston and one from Oregon State University;
- (g) One member selected from the general public at large; and
- (h) One representative of Oregon Indian tribes appointed after consultation with the Commission on Indian Services.

The authorized representative of the governing body of the Oregon International Port of Coos Bay shall serve for a term of two years. This seat was most recently occupied by the previous Port CEO John

Burns, and before that, by Port Commission President David Kronsteiner. Current Port Commissioner Arnie Roblan has expressed interest in serving on the South Slough Management Commission on behalf of the Port.

Commissioner Roblan shared that working in the schools and the South Slough Estuary has been one of the most rewarding aspects of his career. He praised the team's efforts in the estuary, highlighting their consistent community engagement and the underrecognized contributions of those behind the work. While the preservation efforts are ongoing and impactful, they often go unnoticed. Commissioner Roblan expressed excitement about continuing this work.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Edwards (second by Commissioner Hamner), the Board of Commissioners motioned to select Port Commissioner Roblan to serve on the South Slough Management Commission on behalf of the Oregon International Port of Coos Bay. **Motion Passed Unanimously.** (Ayes: Stevens, Edwards, Hamner, and Roblan. Nays: None. Absent: ViksneHill).

C. Community Engagement Plan for PCIP Project

The Port contracted with JLA Public Involvement to create a pre-NEPA Scoping Community Engagement Plan for the PCIP project to help inform the Port on community interests and best practices for community engagement. JLA engaged in a robust stakeholder engagement process and presented the draft Community Engagement Plan to the Port Commission at their December 2024 meeting.

JLA has received feedback on the draft plan and has incorporated the feedback into the final plan. This Community Engagement Plan will be a living document that maintains the flexibility needed for the Port and PCIP staff to make changes as the project progresses.

Ms. Cribbins stated that the Commission is accepting this document in order to close out the scope of work and inform JLA that this phase of the project is considered accepted, allowing implementation to move forward. The Corps will be responsible for its own community engagement in line with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which will differ from this process. Ms. Cribbins added that the Corps will handle their part independently.

Ms. Cribbins emphasized that the Port is proactively engaging with the community to understand potential concerns and feedback, a move not driven by legal requirements but by the Port's commitment to community perspectives. Matt Freisen from the Port has been actively working with JLA to implement this initiative. Ms. Cribbins also mentioned the possibility of hiring additional contract staff to assist with the plan's implementation, though this decision has not been finalized.

Ms. Cribbins noted that the Port is still in the early stages of planning. It is less than 10% into the design process for both the terminal and the railroad. Ms. Cribbins added that questions are welcome, but the Port may not currently have answers. However, the Port is committed to incorporating feedback into future discussions and engineering RFPs.

Ms. Cribbins discussed the ongoing efforts to secure federal funding for the Port, emphasizing collaboration with relevant agencies to finalize contracts and agreements. She acknowledged that while there is a desire for quicker progress in government projects, it's essential to thoroughly negotiate contracts for a solid foundation. Ms. Cribbins said that the federal grants are moving forward, and the Port is actively working with agencies to finalize the funding agreements.

Commissioner Hamner inquired about the implementation plan and how the costs would be covered after JLA closes the project. Ms. Cribbins responded that the implementation would either require an additional contract or the allocation of staff time, which would need to be further discussed with the Commissioners. Additionally, Ms. Cribbins mentioned that the Port had secured state funding for the project in the upcoming legislative session, which could be allocated to cover the implementation costs.

Commissioner Roblan praised the Port's thoughtful approach to the project but raised concerns about potential overlaps between state and federal efforts. He asked how the plan would ensure coordination and whether the state would act independently of federal involvement to avoid conflicts. He also questioned whether JLA or another agency would handle the implementation. Ms. Cribbins clarified that there was no commitment to JLA and explained that the Port, understanding the limitations of federal engagement processes, aimed to go beyond standard procedures. She emphasized that the Port's approach would be more flexible and adaptable, allowing for meaningful public dialogue and incorporating community feedback into decision-making throughout the process.

Commissioner Hamner expressed her agreement with Ms. Cribbins' remarks and appreciated Ms. Cribbins' presentation on the implementation plan to the Commissioners. Commissioner Hamner noted that her assumption was that this plan would serve to gather information that could be used collaboratively with the federal process while also helping the North Point community better understand the local area. She emphasized that she did not view it as conflicting with the federal process and hoped that federal entities would encourage the Port to engage with the public.

Ms. Cribbins emphasized that while the federal government encourages engagement, it does not replace the established process, that the plan is to go above and beyond existing requirements, rather than serve as a substitute. The Corps wanted to make it clear that this plan is not intended to replace the federal process but rather to align with requirements.

Commissioner Roblan highlighted the common lack of comprehensive information in public processes but praised this effort for effectively covering all key components. He emphasized the importance of examining various community aspects and acknowledged the effort involved. Drawing from his experience, he noted that public engagement often occurs only during times of concern but fades once the issue is resolved. He appreciated JLA's proactive approach in encouraging participation. Commissioner Roblan stressed that ongoing, clear communication with the public is vital for the success of any Port project, viewing this initiative as a crucial step toward sustained engagement and transparency.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Roblan (second by Commissioner Hamner), the Board of Commissioners motioned to accept and approve the revised Community Engagement plan for the PCIP Project. **Motion Passed Unanimously.** (Ayes: Stevens, Edwards, Hamner, and Roblan. Nays: None. Absent: ViksneHill).

8. OTHER

9. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Ms. Comstock mentioned that the budget planning calendar includes several budget committee meetings in May, with the first one scheduled for the week of May 12. Additionally, the Charleston Advisory Committee Meeting will also take place in April.

10. COMMISSION COMMENTS

Commissioner Edwards asked Brian Early about FEMA reimbursement for cleanup following the January 2025 incident. Mr. Early confirmed the Port is eligible for 75% reimbursement, about \$60K, but FEMA has placed a hold on the funds, delaying the timeline. Commissioner Edwards also raised concerns about rail cars, specifically the engine and repeated damage to an auxiliary generator from stolen copper. Mr. Early explained that the locomotive's side panels are not locked for safety, making copper theft possible. They are working to minimize the time of the engine being at the downtown depot. The labor-intensive solution has cost CBRL about \$2K due to downtime.

Commissioner Roblan announced that a public engagement event on tsunami evacuation will be held at Sunset Library. Representatives from the police department, school district, and fire department will be in attendance, encouraging community members to participate, learn about evacuation efforts, and stay engaged as planning moves forward.

Commissioner Hamner praised JLA for its contributions to PCIP efforts, especially in rail work and the North Point Terminal project. However, she emphasized the need to consider future generations in decision-making and ensure that marginalized communities are included and their long-term interests protected. She specifically underscored the importance of including marginalized communities, who often lack a voice in these conversations, in shaping long-term, sustainable solutions. She encouraged those engaging with the Board of Commissioners and Port staff to think about the long-term impact of this project. Commissioner Hamner emphasized that North Point has been clear about making this a green project, incorporating technology and innovation. She urged everyone involved to consider what the project will mean 75 to 100 years from now, especially given the state of the 110-year-old railroad infrastructure that was not designed with the future in mind. While aging infrastructure presents challenges, it also creates a great opportunity for long-term strategic planning.

Commissioner Hamner pointed out that if the rail development involves 75-year loans, future generations will bear the financial responsibility for this investment. She praised JLA for providing the most comprehensive information she has seen on the PCIP project but stressed the importance of further collaboration with North Point. Specifically, understanding the financial implications for the railroad—how the investment will be reinvested into public infrastructure and what opportunities it will create for the community. Transparency about how the debt will be repaid is crucial for the public and constituents. Additionally, Commissioner Hamner highlighted the importance of the Community Benefits Plan. If community benefits are being discussed, it is essential to consider the long-term impact on future generations. She acknowledged the focus on job creation and the importance of keeping longshoremen employed and ships coming into the bay. However, she encouraged deeper conversations about what this project will mean 50 to 75 years from now and how it can be leveraged to drive future innovation.

Commissioner Roblan emphasized the importance of financial sustainability for the Port and the broader community. Having served on the Commission and reviewed the finances, he is deeply concerned about ensuring the Port's continued functionality in the future.

Commissioner Roblan has been closely monitoring the financial stability of hospitals and school districts, acknowledging the challenges they face in maintaining operations. He noted that with tax measures already capped, many citizens believe taxes have reached their limit. Regarding communities like Coos Bay, he observed that growth is often constrained, as expansion can sometimes come at the expense of others. Commissioner Roblan emphasized the need for a long-term strategy to sustain and

maintain essential infrastructure, recognizing it as a critical issue that must be addressed. Commissioner Roblan emphasized road maintenance as a major concern, noting that while many complain about potholes, few are willing to contribute to the cost of repairs. He stressed the need for society to find sustainable ways to maintain the infrastructure that is being dependent on. Using the rail system as an example, Commissioner Roblan pointed out how neglect led to its deterioration. Although efforts were made to restore it, the community is still repaying a loan used for those repairs. Looking ahead, he warned that maintenance costs remain a pressing issue. He estimated that bringing the rail service back to Coquille would require at least another million dollars just to make it operational, while fully restoring and maintaining the system would demand investments in the billions. Additionally, Commissioner Roblan highlighted the necessity of ongoing repairs to keep the rail bridge in service for the current population. He emphasized that these long-term infrastructure challenges must be addressed in a sustainable manner. Commissioner Roblan concluded by emphasizing that as community projects advance, it is crucial to ask: How will this investment support the long-term sustainability of the services and infrastructure of our community.

Commissioner Hamner added that if the project moves forward, the North Spit will undergo changes that could impact the thousands of people who access the area for various activities. She noted that this aspect was not addressed in the JLA report and emphasized the importance of considering it in the planning process moving forward.

11. NEXT MEETING DATE – Thursday, March 20, 2025, 11:00 a.m.

12. ADJOURN

President Stevens adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m. and entered into Executive Session, as authorized under ORS 192.660(2), to:

- (f) consider information or records that are exempt by law from public inspection;
- (g) consider preliminary negotiations involving matters of trade or commerce in which the governing body is in competition with governing bodies in other states or nations; and
- (j) carry on negotiations under ORS Chapter 293 with private persons or businesses regarding proposed acquisition, exchange or liquidation of public investments.

Environmental Concerns and the Pacific Coast Intermodal Port Project

As the Pacific Coast Intermodal Port (PCIP) project continues to develop, there has been growing concern in Empire regarding its environmental impacts. While the project promises to enhance intermodal transportation efficiency, there is little indication that it will adequately address the pressing environmental challenges that have long plagued ports around the world.

Yet Unaddressed Environmental Impacts

Despite the increasing urgency of sustainability in the transportation sector, the Pacific Coast Intermodal Port project has not yet provided clear solutions to mitigate its environmental footprint.

1. Continued Air Pollution:

- The expansion of the intermodal network will lead to more trains, and ships moving goods through the region. Without a clear commitment to reducing emissions from these sources, the project risks worsening air pollution on the Oregon South Coast. **Nitrogen oxide (NOx)** emissions and particulate matter from diesel trains and railcars will contribute to smog and respiratory issues, particularly for residents living near port and rail areas.

2. Increased Greenhouse Gas Emissions:

- While the world's attention shifts toward combating climate change, the project has not indicated how it will mitigate **greenhouse gas emissions** from the increased volume of cargo moving through the port system. The use of heavy fuel oil for shipping and diesel for rail will likely exacerbate the carbon footprint of the U.S. supply chain, contradicting global efforts to curb emissions.

3. Risks to Marine Life and Waterways:

- The environmental impact extends beyond air pollution. The PCIP project will require dredging, which will disrupt local marine ecosystems and harm aquatic life. Furthermore, the project does not yet appear to have a comprehensive plan for managing the potential **water pollution** caused by runoff from port operations or the risk of **oil spills** from increased ship traffic.

4. Noise Pollution:

- Activity at the PCIP will worsen **noise pollution** for the Empire community. High decibel levels from trains, and machinery will disrupt the daily lives of local residents and wildlife, making it crucial to incorporate noise-reducing strategies into the project's design to protect homes, schools and businesses.

5. Light Pollution:

While the focus on air and water pollution tends to dominate discussions about the environmental impact of the PCIP, **light pollution** is a growing concern, particularly for Empire residents living directly across from where operations run around the clock. The PCIP require large amounts of artificial lighting to facilitate nighttime operations, ensure safety, and improve visibility for workers and ship

crews. However, the excessive and poorly designed lighting systems will have unintended consequences for both the environment and human health.

Impacts on Wildlife

- **Disruption of Marine Life:** One of the most significant impacts of light pollution is on marine ecosystems. Many species of **sea mammals, birds, and fish** are particularly sensitive to light.
- **Disruption of Migration Patterns:** Migratory birds, especially those that travel along the Pacific Flyway, may become disoriented by the bright lights of the PCIP. This can interfere with their natural migratory routes, leading to exhaustion, increased predation risk, and even death. The lights at night can also disrupt their natural rhythms, including sleep and feeding schedules.
- **Disruption of Insects:** The PCIP's vast areas of lighting will attract and trap insects. This disrupts local ecosystems, as many insects are vital for pollination and are part of the food chain for other wildlife.

Effects on Human Health

- **Disruption of Sleep Patterns:** The Empire Community will be subjected to the glare of artificial lights during nighttime hours. This light pollution will significantly affect residents' sleep quality and overall health, leading to problems such as insomnia, fatigue, and even mental health issues. Studies have shown that exposure to artificial light at night can interfere with the production of **melatonin**, the hormone responsible for regulating sleep, which can lead to disrupted circadian rhythms.
- **Light Glare and Safety Concerns:** While lights are necessary for port operations, poorly designed lighting can cause glare that reduces visibility for drivers and workers, posing potential safety risks. The combination of harsh artificial lighting and the constant flow of rail and vehicles can increase accidents and slow down operations, potentially reducing efficiency at the port.

Potentially Missed Opportunity for Sustainability

The failure to address these environmental concerns represents a missed opportunity for the Pacific Coast Intermodal Port project to set a new standard for green logistics. In a time when other ports around the world are making strides in electrifying equipment, reducing emissions, and adopting cleaner shipping technologies, this project risks falling behind by neglecting to incorporate sustainable practices from the outset.

The lack of any clear plan to address environmental impacts raises questions about the long-term viability of the project. As concerns about climate change and air quality continue to grow, stakeholders—including local governments, businesses, and environmental groups—are calling for more proactive measures to ensure that the project does not simply contribute to existing problems but instead fosters a more sustainable future for trade and transportation.

Potential Solutions

There is still time to address these concerns. The project could benefit from integrating some of the following solutions:

Solutions to Mitigate Air and Water Pollution

- **Investment in Green Technologies:** Electrification of port equipment, including cranes and service vehicles, and the adoption of cleaner fuels for shipping vessels could significantly reduce the project's environmental impact.
- **Stricter Emission Standards:** Implementing stronger emission standards for rail would help reduce the air pollution caused by increased traffic.
- **Continual Environmental Impact Assessments:** Thorough, ongoing environmental impact assessments (EIA) should be conducted to understand and address potential harms to the surrounding ecosystems, particularly marine life as the PCIP operates.

Solutions to Mitigate Light Pollution

- **Smart Lighting Design:** One potential solution to reduce light pollution is to implement **smart lighting systems** that can be dimmed or turned off when not needed. Ports could also invest in directional lighting, focusing light where it's needed most and minimizing the spread of light into the surrounding environment.
- **Use of LED Lighting:** Transitioning to energy-efficient **LED lights** that emit less light pollution and have lower environmental impact could be a practical solution. LEDs can be designed to focus light where it's most necessary, reducing light spill into nearby habitats.
- **Nighttime Lighting Restrictions:** Some ports around the world have implemented **lighting curfews** or restrictions, dimming or turning off non-essential lights during certain hours to minimize light pollution. By setting limits on the amount of artificial light emitted into the night sky, ports can help reduce disruption to both human communities and wildlife.

Conclusion

Without a clear commitment to sustainability, the **Pacific Coast Intermodal Port project** risks contributing to the very environmental issues it should be working to minimize. As the project moves forward, it's critical that stakeholders prioritize environmental responsibility and adopt measures that will reduce pollution, safeguard local ecosystems, and align with global sustainability goals. Otherwise, the benefits of improved efficiency in intermodal transportation may come at an unacceptable environmental cost.

Global Case Studies

Tackling Light Pollution at World Ports

Several ports around the world have recognized the negative impacts of light pollution and have taken steps to reduce it. These examples showcase how a balance between operational efficiency and environmental stewardship can be achieved, providing valuable lessons for the Pacific Coast Intermodal Port project.

1. Port of Vancouver, Canada

- **Lighting Management Program:** The Port of Vancouver has implemented a comprehensive **Lighting Management Program** aimed at reducing light pollution in the surrounding areas. This program focuses on installing energy-efficient **LED lights** that are directional and dimmable, ensuring they only illuminate necessary areas. The port has worked closely with local environmental groups to design lighting systems that minimize the impact on local wildlife, particularly migratory birds.
- **Compliance with Dark Sky Standards:** As part of its commitment to environmental responsibility, the Port of Vancouver has adopted principles aligned with **dark sky standards**, which help reduce the excessive spread of artificial light. By limiting non-essential lighting during certain periods, the port ensures that it does not interfere with the natural rhythms of wildlife or the human community.

2. Port of Long Beach, California

- **Energy-Efficient LED Lighting:** The Port of Long Beach has taken steps to modernize its lighting systems with the adoption of **LED technology** to improve energy efficiency and reduce light spill. This initiative is part of a broader sustainability effort to reduce the port's overall environmental footprint. The LEDs are designed to focus light on operational areas and reduce the amount of light projected into the surrounding environment.
- **Environmental Mitigation Measures:** The port has made significant progress in reducing **light trespass**, which is the unintended illumination of areas outside the port's boundaries. This is especially important for nearby neighborhoods and wildlife habitats, where light pollution can disrupt ecosystems. The port is continually evaluating and improving its lighting practices to align with best practices for reducing light pollution.

3. Port of Rotterdam, Netherlands

- **Innovative Lighting Solutions:** As one of the largest ports in Europe, the **Port of Rotterdam** has implemented cutting-edge lighting solutions to tackle light pollution. The port uses **adaptive lighting**, which adjusts the brightness of lights depending on the time of day and the level of activity. During off-peak hours, lights are dimmed to reduce the overall impact of artificial lighting on the environment.
- **Collaboration with Environmental Agencies:** Rotterdam has partnered with environmental agencies to assess the effects of port lighting on surrounding areas and has

taken measures to ensure that local wildlife, such as migrating birds, are not adversely affected by artificial light. The port's efforts are designed to balance operational efficiency with environmental preservation, proving that large-scale industrial operations can adopt sustainable practices.

4. Port of Los Angeles, California

- **Lighting Upgrades for Wildlife Protection:** The **Port of Los Angeles** has worked with conservation organizations to reduce light pollution and protect local wildlife, particularly the endangered **California least tern**, a species of bird that is sensitive to artificial light. The port has adjusted lighting to be less intrusive during nesting seasons and has employed special shielding to direct light away from sensitive areas.
- **Nighttime Lighting Restrictions:** In response to concerns about light pollution, the Port of Los Angeles has implemented some nighttime lighting restrictions and strategies to lower illumination during periods when no significant port activity is taking place. These measures help reduce the impact of light on the surrounding community and wildlife habitats.

5. Port of Sydney, Australia

- **Light Pollution Monitoring:** The Port of Sydney has partnered with local universities and environmental organizations to monitor and assess the effects of port lighting on the surrounding ecosystem. The findings have led to several **light reduction initiatives**, including switching to low-impact lighting and adjusting light fixtures to prevent upward light spill.
- **Sustainability Certification:** The port has received recognition for its efforts to reduce light pollution, and it is working toward achieving **sustainability certification** that includes strict criteria for managing light pollution. The port's initiatives are part of a broader goal to reduce its carbon footprint and improve environmental quality in the surrounding area.

Conclusion: Light Pollution Challenges at Ports

These global case studies demonstrate that ports can take meaningful steps to reduce **light pollution** while maintaining efficient operations. From adopting **LED lighting** to implementing **adaptive lighting** systems, ports around the world are setting important precedents for how the shipping and logistics industry can work in harmony with environmental goals. By learning from these examples, the **Pacific Coast Intermodal Port project** has the opportunity to incorporate similar strategies and become a leader in sustainable port operations, ensuring that the environmental impacts of light pollution are minimized.

Global Case Studies

Tackling Air and Water Pollution at World Ports

1. Port of Los Angeles and Long Beach – Air Pollution

The **Port of Los Angeles** and the **Port of Long Beach**, the busiest ports in the United States, have long struggled with severe **air pollution**. The massive volume of cargo coming through these ports involves a large number of diesel trucks, cargo ships, and rail transport, all of which contribute significantly to local air quality issues. In particular:

- **Emissions** from diesel-powered trucks and ships are major contributors to the region's high levels of nitrogen oxides (NOx) and particulate matter (PM). These pollutants are linked to respiratory diseases, cardiovascular conditions, and poor air quality in nearby communities, particularly affecting the **Harbor Area** and surrounding neighborhoods.
- In 2010, the **Port of Los Angeles** adopted a **Clean Truck Program**, which was aimed at reducing emissions from trucks. However, despite these efforts, challenges remain in fully transitioning to cleaner technologies. **Ship emissions** continue to be a significant issue, with vessels often using heavy fuel oil that produces large amounts of sulfur dioxide (SO₂), a key contributor to smog and acid rain.

Lessons Learned:

- **Ongoing improvements** are needed to reduce air pollution from port activities, particularly in high-traffic areas. While the Clean Truck Program has seen progress, a more aggressive push toward electrifying vehicles and investing in cleaner fuel alternatives for ships would significantly reduce emissions.
- **Collaboration with local communities** and health agencies is crucial for developing better solutions that ensure public health and safety.

2. Port of Shanghai – Water Pollution

The **Port of Shanghai**, one of the busiest ports in the world, has faced severe **water pollution** issues as a result of the rapid expansion of port activities and maritime traffic.

- The **Yangtze River**, which flows through Shanghai and serves as a major shipping lane, has suffered from **oil spills**, **ballast water discharge**, and the release of **hazardous cargo residues**. These pollutants harm marine life, degrade water quality, and contribute to the destruction of aquatic ecosystems.
- In recent years, there have been instances of **chemical spills** from cargo ships and port equipment, leading to contamination of nearby water bodies and posing long-term risks to marine biodiversity.

- The **Port of Shanghai** has also struggled with **plastic pollution** due to the large amount of cargo containers moving through the region, resulting in plastics and debris being discharged into the water.

Lessons Learned:

- To mitigate water pollution, the **Port of Shanghai** has started to adopt stricter **pollution control measures** and better waste management practices. However, ongoing monitoring and enforcement of environmental regulations are crucial for preventing further contamination.
- There's a pressing need to invest in **spill containment technologies**, improve **ballast water treatment** methods, and expand **recycling programs** for marine waste.

3. Port of Mumbai – Oil Spills

The **Port of Mumbai**, located in India, has faced several incidents of **oil spills** due to accidents involving oil tankers and the handling of bulk shipments. These oil spills have caused severe environmental damage to the surrounding marine life and coastal ecosystems.

- One notable incident occurred in 2010 when an oil tanker carrying crude oil collided with a container vessel off the coast of Mumbai, resulting in a large oil spill. This spill affected beaches, local wildlife, and fishing communities, and it took months for cleanup operations to fully contain the environmental damage.
- The port has faced challenges related to **unregulated discharge of wastewater** from ships, leading to contamination of surrounding waters with hydrocarbons, plastics, and chemicals.

Lessons Learned:

- **Stricter regulations** and the development of better emergency response strategies are critical to prevent oil spills. Improved **oil spill response plans** and **environmental monitoring** should be a priority for any future port expansion projects.
- Implementing advanced **oil containment booms** and **spill detection technologies** would improve the port's ability to handle and contain accidents swiftly.

4. Port of Santos – Toxic Dumping

The **Port of Santos**, Brazil's largest port, has faced several pollution challenges related to **toxic waste disposal** and **illegal dumping** of hazardous materials.

- Ships and industrial activities at the port have led to the discharge of **heavy metals, chemicals, and other hazardous waste** into nearby waterways. In particular, **lead and**

mercury contamination has been a significant concern, as these pollutants have long-term effects on human health and marine life.

- In 2000, a large-scale environmental cleanup effort was required due to the accumulation of toxic sediments in the harbor, which had resulted from decades of illegal dumping and poor waste management practices.

Lessons Learned:

- Port authorities need to implement **stricter waste disposal protocols** and enforce regulations against illegal dumping. Regular **environmental audits** and **monitoring** of water quality in and around the port area are essential to detect and address pollution early.
- Port operators must invest in **better waste management infrastructure** and ensure that all hazardous materials are handled and disposed of safely.

5. Port of Alexandria, Egypt – Air and Water Pollution

The **Port of Alexandria**, one of the busiest ports in the Mediterranean, has long been plagued by **air and water pollution** due to its industrial nature. The port is located near the **Alexandria Oil Refinery**, which processes large amounts of crude oil and petrochemicals, contributing to both air and water contamination.

- **Air pollution** from the burning of fossil fuels, particularly **sulfur dioxide (SO₂)**, nitrogen oxides (NO_x), and particulate matter, significantly impacts air quality in Alexandria. This pollution is linked to respiratory diseases, cardiovascular problems, and premature deaths in nearby communities.
- **Water pollution** is another major issue. The port's proximity to industrial facilities means that **toxic waste** and untreated wastewater often find their way into the Mediterranean Sea, harming local marine life and fisheries.

Lessons Learned:

- The **Port of Alexandria** has initiated several pollution control measures, including upgrading its waste management systems and improving air quality monitoring. However, stronger **environmental regulations** are needed to limit the emission of harmful gases from refineries and other industrial operations near the port.
- The port could also benefit from **advanced water treatment systems** to address wastewater discharge and reduce its impact on the surrounding marine environment.

Conclusion: Air and Water Pollution Challenges at Ports

These case studies highlight the ongoing challenges of **port pollution**, whether it's through air, water, or toxic waste contamination. While several ports have taken steps to address these issues, the need for proactive measures remains critical to reducing environmental impacts. The **Pacific Coast Intermodal Port project** can learn from these cases by:

- **Implementing strict environmental regulations** from the start of the project.
- Investing in **advanced technologies** for waste management, pollution detection, and emergency response.
- Collaborating with **local communities, environmental groups, and regulatory bodies** to ensure the project's sustainability.

By taking these lessons to heart, new ports and port expansions can minimize their environmental impact and set a positive example for future industrial projects.

Global Case Studies

Tackling Noise Pollution at World Ports

1. Port of Hong Kong – Noise Pollution from Vessel Operations

The **Port of Hong Kong**, one of the busiest ports globally, is known for significant **noise pollution** caused by its dense shipping activities.

- **Source of Noise:** The **vessel traffic** in Hong Kong, especially the massive container ships that dock at the port, generates a considerable amount of **underwater and airborne noise**. The port's location, surrounded by densely populated areas, means that port activities can disrupt nearby residential neighborhoods.
- **Impact on Communities:** Local residents report disturbances from the **constant ship sirens, cargo handling operations**, and the sounds of heavy machinery. These sounds can disrupt sleep, affect mental well-being, and increase stress levels.
- **Impact on Marine Life:** Additionally, underwater noise from ships' engines, propellers, and cargo handling can affect marine life, especially species such as **dolphins and whales**, which rely on echolocation for navigation and communication.

Mitigation Efforts:

- The Hong Kong Marine Department has been working to reduce noise from **vessel operations**, especially focusing on quieter vessel technology and noise-reducing hull designs.
- The port also implements **restricted night-time operations** to reduce the disturbance in residential areas, particularly in areas closest to the waterfront.

2. Port of Rotterdam – Industrial Noise Pollution

The **Port of Rotterdam**, one of Europe's largest container ports, deals with both **industrial and transportation noise**, which significantly impacts the surrounding urban environment.

- **Source of Noise:** The **railway lines, trucks, and large cranes** used for unloading containers create constant noise. The sounds of containers being moved and heavy machinery operating are amplified in certain parts of the port, often affecting local residential communities in Rotterdam's **Waalhaven** and **Feijenoord** districts.
- **Impact on Communities:** Residents report disturbances caused by noise from the port operations, including **repeated engine sounds, train whistles, and container handling equipment**. The noise pollution is particularly disruptive during the night, as the port operates 24/7.
- **Impact on Wildlife:** Noise from port operations, especially **train movements** and the **constant operation of cranes**, disrupts the **local bird populations**, some of which rely on quiet environments for breeding. Research has shown that loud noises can interfere with birds' ability to communicate and find mates, leading to **displacement** from their habitats.

Mitigation Efforts:

- Rotterdam has introduced **sound barriers** around sensitive residential areas near the port to mitigate the impact of port noise.
- The port has also worked on **better urban planning**, placing residential areas farther away from the noisiest parts of the port and improving noise insulation in affected buildings.
- The implementation of **quieter shipping technologies**, such as the use of **electric cranes** and quieter rail systems, is also a step toward reducing noise pollution.

3. Port of Los Angeles – Noise Pollution from Trucks and Cranes

The **Port of Los Angeles**, located in the heart of Southern California, has long struggled with **noise pollution** from its 24/7 operations.

- **Source of Noise:** The **trucks and cranes** used for moving containers within the port area generate constant noise. The heavy truck traffic, especially near residential areas in **San Pedro**, contributes to high levels of noise, with the sound of engines, air brakes, and the movement of containers being particularly loud.
- **Impact on Communities:** The noise is a significant nuisance for **local residents** in neighborhoods near the port, including those in **Wilmington** and **San Pedro**. The **continuous truck traffic** disrupts sleep and increases stress levels, contributing to higher rates of **chronic health conditions** in the surrounding community.

- **Impact on Wildlife:** Research has also shown that **marine mammals** like **sea lions** and **dolphins**, which are present near the Port of Los Angeles, are affected by the **subsurface noise** generated by the movement of large vessels, which interferes with their ability to communicate, navigate, and find food.

Mitigation Efforts:

- The Port of Los Angeles has taken steps to reduce **truck noise** by introducing **clean truck programs** that replace older, louder trucks with newer, quieter models.
- **Acoustic barriers** and **buffer zones** between the residential areas and the noisiest parts of the port have been added to mitigate noise pollution.
- The port has also collaborated with environmental organizations to conduct **marine noise research** and implement quieter practices in shipping operations.

4. Port of Sydney, Australia – Noise Pollution from Container Operations

The **Port of Sydney** is located close to residential areas, and **noise pollution** from its container terminals has been a growing concern.

- **Source of Noise:** The noise mainly comes from **container cranes**, **vessel movements**, and **truck traffic**. These activities are loud enough to disturb nearby neighborhoods, especially during the night when there are fewer distractions.
- **Impact on Communities:** Residents in areas like **Balmain** and **Rozelle** report disturbances from the noise created by **cranes**, **shipping activity**, and **diesel-powered trucks**. The constant hum of operations has been linked to sleep disturbances, increased anxiety, and lowered quality of life.
- **Impact on Marine Life:** The **underwater noise** generated by large vessels, especially those in the **international shipping lanes**, has raised concerns about the potential **displacement of marine species** like **whales** and **dolphins**, which rely heavily on echolocation for communication and navigation.

Mitigation Efforts:

- The Port of Sydney has made moves to **restrict certain high-noise activities** during nighttime hours to limit the impact on surrounding communities.
- The port has worked with local authorities to implement **noise mapping** technology, identifying the loudest areas of the port and taking steps to **shield residential areas** from excessive noise.
- The port is also considering **quieter technologies** for container handling and **electrification of dockside cranes** to reduce noise.

5. Port of Genoa, Italy – Noise Pollution from Maritime Traffic

The **Port of Genoa**, Italy's busiest container port, has dealt with substantial issues related to **port-generated noise**.

- **Source of Noise: Maritime traffic**, particularly **cargo ships** and **ferries**, produces significant underwater and airborne noise, affecting both human residents and marine life. The **movements of large ships** in the narrow passages of the harbor contribute to noise levels in nearby residential areas.
- **Impact on Communities:** Genoa is a densely populated city with residential neighborhoods located very close to the port. The **noise from ferries, cranes, and ship movements** disrupts the daily lives of residents, especially during the night when noise levels are less masked by other city sounds.
- **Impact on Marine Life:** Underwater noise generated by port activities disturbs local marine species, particularly those that rely on **vocalizations** for communication, such as **dolphins and fish**.

Mitigation Efforts:

- The Port of Genoa has implemented **noise reduction technologies** on container cranes and other equipment.
- The port is working to improve **vessel traffic management**, particularly to minimize unnecessary vessel movements during the night hours, thereby reducing **marine noise pollution**.
- **Green port strategies**, such as encouraging the use of **electrically powered machinery**, are being explored to reduce overall noise levels.

Conclusion: Noise Pollution Challenges at Ports

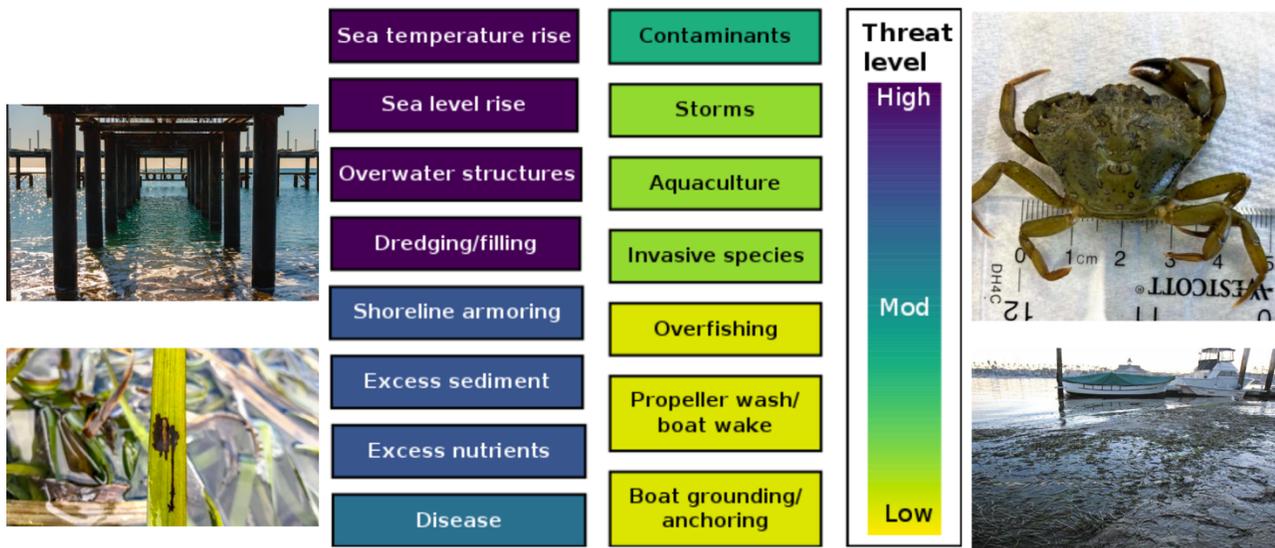
Ports around the world face ongoing challenges in managing **noise pollution**, which not only impacts nearby communities but also disrupts local wildlife. The **Port of Hong Kong, Port of Rotterdam, Port of Los Angeles, Port of Sydney, and Port of Genoa** all serve as examples of how large-scale port operations contribute to noise, affecting the quality of life for residents and disturbing marine ecosystems.

Mitigation efforts, including **quieter technologies, operational restrictions, and community engagement**, can help reduce noise pollution. Ports can look to these case studies to improve practices and minimize the impact of noise pollution on human health and local wildlife. Implementing best practices such as **soundproofing, traffic management, and quiet technologies** can make ports more sustainable for both people and the environment.

My 3-minute talks regarding the values of estuaries make it difficult to explain in depth why it is important for you to consider using tools other than the shovel/suction dredge. Last time I was before you, I spoke of flood protection. All of these ecological services (estuarine values) are interrelated. One affects the other. So today, I will address four that are too tightly associated to cover alone.

- Fish/shellfish habitat – rearing sites and nurseries
- Sediment trapping/nutrient storage
- Carbon sequestration (blue carbon)
- Filtering capacity
- Flood protection (1/16/25)
- Migrating wildlife feeding stops

The loss of tidal wetlands (~85%) in the estuary and the decline in eel grass beds in the bay leads to degradation in food production, starting with sediment trapping and storage. This couples with filtering of toxins and pathogens. The food production in estuaries, one of the richest systems on the planet, starts with this nutrient-laden sediment. Microbes consume the nutrients, larger microbes eat these, then on up the food chain from invertebrates to vertebrates, including most of the commercially harvested fish and shellfish. Marine associated mammals and migratory birds also focus their feeding attention on estuaries. These have economic value to humans. With deepening and widening the bay, eel grass beds will be lost. The loss will be compounded, and indeed accelerate with an increase of hydraulic scouring due to the greater volume of tidal surge (and flooding propensity). And eelgrass has been declining in our estuary due to many reasons. We have direct control of at least a few of the highest/most destructive threats which include:



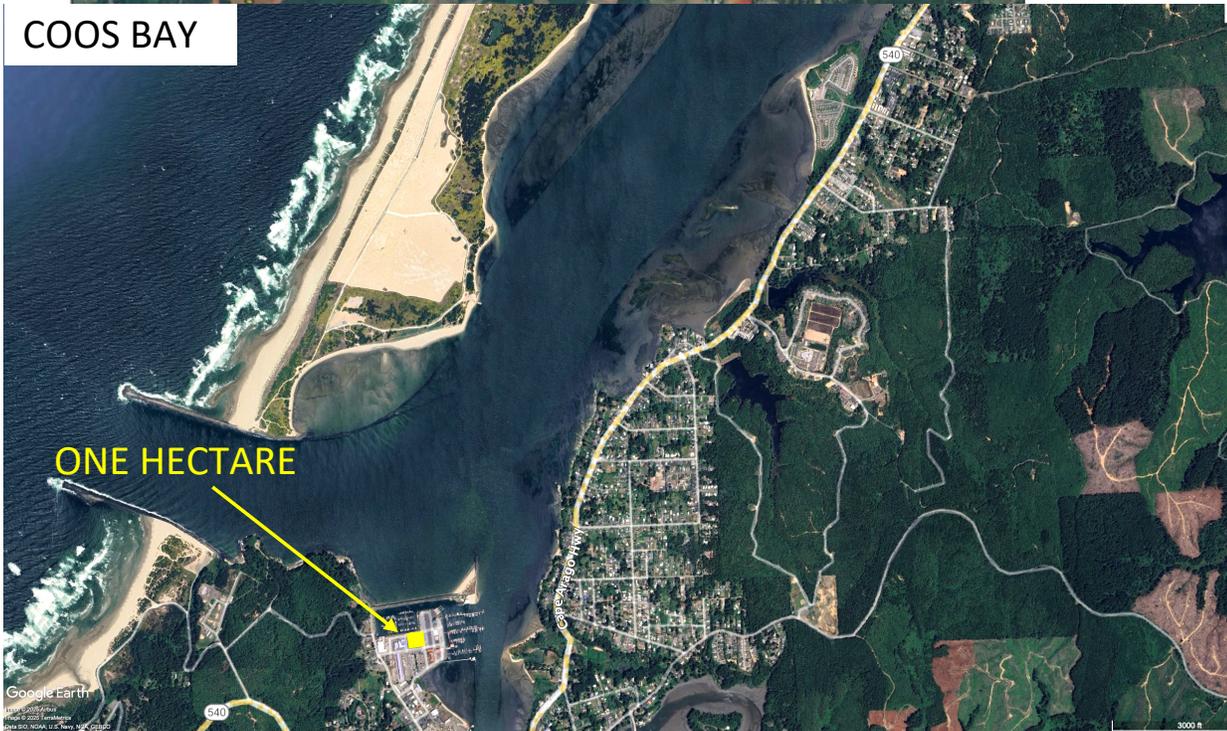
Images from [Caitlin Magel Phd.](#) Presentation in Coos Bay, 1/26/25

It has been calculated by the [Suzuki Foundation](#) that eelgrass beds have the value of \$60,000/hectare/year. That includes the food producing value with recreational and tourism values. Further dredging will negatively impact all these ecological services and cause economic loss for those of us who benefit from these estuarine values, other than shipping/commerce.

2016



Eelgrass



One hectare is equal to the parking area bordered by Albacore Dr., Guano Rock Ln, and Crossline Rd. next to the small boat basin.