

FREIGHT MOBILITY STRATEGIC INVESTMENT BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

June 13, 2025 • 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. • Wenatchee, WA

<https://tvw.org/watch/?eventID=2025061051>

In Attendance

BOARD MEMBERS

Temple Lentz, Chair

Leonard Barnes (Virtual)

Peter Bennett

Matthew Colvin

Al French

Erik Hansen

Johan Hellman

Anne McEnerny-Ogle

Jon Snyder

Ben Wick

Kerri Woehler (Proxy for Julie Meredith)

Cory Wright

Not Present:

John McCarthy

Aaron Hunt, Ex-officio

FMSIB STAFF

Brandy DeLange, Executive Director

Joy Dopita, Executive Assistant

Fred Wenhardt, Transportation Planning Specialist

GUEST PRESENTERS

Richard Evans, Office of Senator Cantwell

Geoff Potter, Office of Governor Ferguson

Ruby Gaston, Office of Congresswoman Schrier

Jay Drye, WSDOT Local Programs Division

Jason Beloso, WSDOT Rail, Freight, and Ports Division

Meeting Convenes

Chair Lentz convened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and requested board members, FMSIB staff, and guests introduce themselves.

Public Comment

Chair Lentz asked if anyone would like to share public comment. No one stepped forward.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Wright moved to accept the board meeting minutes as amended for March 21, 2025. *Mayor McEnerny-Ogle* seconded.

MOTION APPROVED

(See attachment: March 21 Board Meeting Minutes Revised Final)

Office of Senator Cantwell Briefing

Richard Evans, Central Washington Outreach Director for Senator Cantwell's Office, provided a Surface Transportation Authorization update.

Director DeLange highlighted that FMSIB is preparing for reauthorization by beginning to engage with the appropriate partners and stakeholders. She also noted that many communities are submitting proposed projects to congressional members and asked Mr. Evans how they might work with Senator Cantwell more effectively and where the federal funds might be leveraged.

Mr. Evans explained that Senator Cantwell's office will provide letters of support, opportunities for engagement, and assist in adjusting grant applications for upcoming projects if communities are having trouble with the process. Senator Cantwell's office can also assist communities that are running into delays or trouble with the process.

Mr. Snyder shared that the City of Spokane had money revoked from grants that had been federally awarded that had already been appropriated to the city. In addition, a transportation grant was paused for four months, resulting in delays which creates strain. As a larger city, Spokane has the resources and internal capacity to apply for and administer grants. When pauses occur or authorization is withdrawn it creates difficulties and hardships for smaller cities who pay consultants to complete federal grant applications. It is difficult to look at long-range plans and know how to appropriately budget with so much uncertainty at the federal level.

Mr. Evans explained that Senator Cantwell's office is using their resources to help communities, large and small, that are experiencing revoked or delayed funding.

(See attachment: Cantwell Office Update)

Office of Governor Ferguson Briefing

Geoff Potter, Director of International Relations and Protocol for Governor Ferguson's office, provided an overview of the current federal trade policy landscape, focusing on tariffs and their widespread implications for Washington State's economy, export industries, and freight infrastructure. He explained that the federal administration, continuing from both the Trump and Biden eras, has used three primary tariff mechanisms: Section 232, Section 301, and more recently, the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA). The IEEPA-based

tariffs, particularly controversial, have been used to justify steep tariffs (up to 145%) on countries like China, Canada, and Mexico, citing emergencies such as fentanyl inflows and immigration.

Mr. Potter emphasized that the scale and use of these tariffs as coercive policy tools have had damaging consequences. While some industries, like steel and aluminum manufacturing, benefit, others, such as agriculture and aerospace, are hurt by reduced access to foreign markets. He noted that the business environment has become uncertain and volatile, with many companies halting plans to expand into new markets due to unpredictability in trade policy.

Washington State is actively challenging these tariffs. Governor Ferguson is leading a coalition that filed an amicus brief in support of litigation in the United States Court of International Trade, which has preliminarily ruled that the IEEPA tariffs may lack legal basis. However, these tariffs remain in effect while litigation continues.

The economic fallout includes:

- Rising costs for key industries and construction inputs (steel, aluminum, semiconductors, lumber), threatening major infrastructure projects.
- An unsettling effect on exporters due to uncertainty, leading to stagnated hiring and investment.
- Increased shipping costs and shifting port activity away from the United States to places like Canada.
- A projected long-term negative impact on GDP, job growth, and state revenues, currently being studied by Office of Financial Management (OFM) economists.

Mr. Potter suggested that the situation is unlikely to improve soon. Although some mitigation strategies—such as leveraging free trade zones or finding alternative supply sources—are being considered, the broader economic and infrastructure impacts will be difficult to fully avoid.

Mr. Colvin highlighted that Washington State passed a budget with aggressive new revenues and asked what the governor's office anticipated response or outlook would be in 12 months if trade does decline.

Mr. Potter noted that the timeline includes the governor's first full budget proposals and policy agenda for the legislature and cannot predict that far out. The immediate focus has been turning off, through legal action, the most damaging IEEPA tariffs on Canada, Mexico, China, and the reciprocal tariffs on the entire globe. If that can be achieved through legal action individual shippers will legally be entitled to being recouped on what they have paid in tariffs.

Mr. Hellman recalled a similar period in the mid-2000's when the West Coast governors worked together to address interstate issues particularly in environmental protection and climate change. *Mr. Hellman* then asked if there has been discussion on a coordinated approach between the three West Coast governors in this environment?

Mr. Potter explained that at a broad level Washington is well practiced in collaborating in a host of different areas, and the West Coast states are working together on the litigation that is underway regarding the IEEPA tariffs. This scenario is different because Washington ports are competing with ports in California and British Columbia for landings. Many entities represented on this board such as various shippers, exporters, and freight interests have been very vocal recently about the harm this is causing for businesses and communities for the provision of public services downstream in this revenue conversation. Although Governor Ferguson can lead and organize the conversation, we are not the most persuasive voices to the administration and Congress in place. Hearing from businesses, agriculture, and freight interests that are being harmed, in concert with those efforts we are undertaking as sustained as a region, is undoubtedly going to be part of the solution.

Director DeLange asked *Mr. Potter* to expand on the tariff study that's being conducted and asked if there is space for potential policy development based off what comes from the study.

Mr. Potter reported they are in the beginning phase to think in a very detailed fashion about the government's upcoming policy proposals in the next legislative session, so it's important to have that conversation now. The OFM forecast is meant to provide a holistic look at the state economy and the impact to the state revenue picture and business and occupation (B&O) tax for reduced economic activity, exporting, and jobs.

Office of Congresswoman Schrier Briefing

Ruby Gaston, Central Washington Manager for Congresswoman Schrier's office, spoke about the importance of freight mobility to Central Washington's economy, particularly for agriculture, manufacturing, and supply chains. Efficient freight systems are essential for economic competitiveness, job creation, reliable supply chains, and quality of life, but face challenges such as aging infrastructure, congestion, and limited truck parking.

Key projects supported by the congresswoman include:

- Confluence Parkway Project in Wenatchee
- I-90 widening in Kittitas County
- Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program
- Truck Parking Implementation Plan
- Shortline Railroad Tax Credit Modernization Act
- Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program

The congresswoman's office has backed multiple local and regional transportation funding requests, including county governments, WSDOT, and other transportation organizations. Overall, investing in freight mobility is framed as an investment in Central Washington's future prosperity and quality of life.

Commissioner Wright expressed appreciation for Congresswoman Schrier's support to bolster our state's only east-west T-1 corridor, which has increased studying truck parking alternatives on both sides of the pass.

Chair and Board Member Reports

Chair Lentz asked if board members had information to report regarding impacts of tariffs or recent activity in global uncertainty and their impacts on jurisdictions or industries.

Ms. Woehler shared that WSDOT is watching market conditions and looking into large materials purchases such as asphalt and salt. At this point they have not seen increases from highway contractors but are tracking and monitoring everything closely.

Mr. Snyder reported that the Spokane area has a coalition of people putting together a technology hub for lightweight aerospace manufacturing components and materials, which has received support from the Department of Commerce and current and past governors. Today, they were told that new funding would be rescinded from the federal government, which illustrates another instance where a promising economic development effort is now on hold.

Mr. Colvin added from the trucking perspective they have not seen significant growth which could be considered stagflation. The trucking industry is largely cyclical, and they have been at a trough in pricing for about three years. Although demand increased due to possible tariffs, they have now seen the demand begin to wane. Currently there has been no significant impact, positive or negative, due to the tariffs.

Mr. Bennett asked, with opposition to electrification in Washington, DC, what the status is on the state's electrification projects and if that money can be used elsewhere?

Mr. Colvin explained the California Air Resources Board (CARB) mandate, for both fleet replacement through clean trucks and clean fleets, that Washington State was tied to has been nullified by the current administration. The most recent nullification was around sales mandates for the adoption of zero emission vehicles. The Washington Trucking Association (WTA) is hearing from the governor's office and Department of Ecology that there was an intent to continue to push forward, regardless of the nullification of the California mandate.

Commissioner French spoke about the technology hub in Spokane. While there has been a shift at the federal level in terms of focus, he has been told that the technology hub is a great project and will probably do very well in the next round of funding. He is working with a company out of France that is going to close on 85 acres and provide manufacturing facilities in Spokane County, and a Canadian company that is looking to invest significant dollars in Spokane. You must learn to adjust, as we did with COVID.

Mr. Colvin added that Tree Top does a fair amount of work with Canadian manufacturers, co-backers, and private entrepreneurs and there is a great deal of discussion about moving manufacturing to the United States.

Executive Director COLA

Chair Lentz directed the Board's attention to the memo regarding the Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) approved by the legislature for the 2025-2027 biennium. In May of 2025, the governor signed the Washington State biennial budget that included a three-percent COLA effective July 1, 2025, as well as a two-percent COLA effective July 1, 2026. While the legislature approved the increase in the budget, because the executive director is an "exempt employee", the board must approve any increase.

Commissioner French moved to approve the COLA for Executive Director Brandy DeLange. Mayor McEnerny-Ogle seconded.

MOTION APPROVED

(See attachment: ED COLA Increase 6.13.25)

Executive Director Report

Director DeLange provided a summary overview of the 2025 legislative session, which was generally positive, with no harmful impacts and full funding for 2025-2027 board recommendations. However, no new revenue was secured, and FMSIB may face an operating deficit in the future.

The Six-Year Investment Program provides a valuable opportunity to strengthen legislative outreach by showcasing before-and-after visuals of infrastructure improvements, how the projects are improving safety and access in communities, and creating a more efficient system. Director DeLange will begin engagement with Senate and House transportation committee members, as well as other key legislators from Ways and Means and the Appropriations committees to highlight transportation's intersection with the operating budget. Board members are encouraged to continue advocacy with both state and federal representatives to push for increased investment.

The FMSIB office is in the midst of moving to a new location at the Natural Resources Building, which should be completed in the first week of July. FMSIB will continue to co-locate with the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB), but we expect cost savings with reduced rent and utilities.

Director DeLange spoke about the coordination of port, city, and county tours and solicited feedback from board members on specific stakeholders or projects in their communities that FMSIB should be connecting with. It would be helpful for board members to share ideas or concepts for future tours and workshops to explore the work they are doing.

The board began discussion on the 2026 meeting schedule, including dates, locations, and the possibility of moving some meetings online to save costs amid a possible \$57,000 budget gap. While many members value in-person meetings for relationship building and informal discussions, there was agreement on preparing a contingency plan for virtual options to demonstrate fiscal responsibility if legislative funding is not secured. Suggestions included combining or adjusting meeting dates, using free conference rooms, aligning with other organizations' events, or holding more meetings in Olympia to reduce travel expenses. Some proposed targeted cuts (around \$20,000) as a good-faith gesture while simultaneously working with legislators to find permanent budget adjustments to reflect new staff and board expansion. The group reached consensus on pursuing both a legislative funding request and a backup cost-savings plan, with staff tasked to refine proposals.

(See presentation: 2026 FMSIB Meeting Schedule and Proposed Cost Savings)

Six-Year Investment Program Committee Update

Director DeLange recapped the discussion from the workshop and immediate changes that were made to include:

- Better define regional freight importance versus statewide freight importance.
- Encourage applicants to provide supporting documentation, such as letters of support or other funding opportunities being leveraged at the local level, to show the importance of their project.
- Encourage applicants to provide visual support, such as pictures, drone footage, etc., of current conditions or improvements being proposed.

Mr. Wenhardt provided a summary of the four Six-Year Investment Program Committee meetings in which the committee reviewed application scoring criteria and point distribution, project eligibility, project regional distribution, and Washington Administrative Code (WAC) updates. The committee recommendations include:

- Update scoring criteria to encourage a wider variety of project applicants.
- The committee considered codifying regional distribution into the WAC but ultimately decided that establishing a guiding board policy/principle for regional distribution is more appropriate.
- Maintain existing targets of recommended funding distribution per category, better define project eligibility, and modify the application to better describe project categories.

Director DeLange outlined that the next steps for staff are to update the application to reflect changes adopted today and begin work on the validation process. FMSIB received funding to support developing an outreach and engagement plan for the Six-Year Investment Program. As part of that effort, staff will work with consultants to develop materials that support applicant interest during a call for projects. Additionally, staff will be attending appropriate stakeholder and association conferences to educate and incentivize potential applicants.

Committee members will review the application and program-related WACs at their next meeting.

Mr. Barnes inquired as to when the tonnage and volume data will be reviewed for ranking, as it seems unchanged since 1999. Director DeLange shared that the Six-Year Investment Committee has discussed this topic and where updates may be necessary in the future. Although it may not be appropriate for the next round of applications, it is certainly a conversation that should happen on a larger scale with FMSIB and WDOT concurrently. She noted that *Mr. Wenhardt* has addressed the question of tonnage and volume in other areas in the application, and scoring criteria itself, without overly weighting it to avoid the perception that the application is too road-focused.

Mr. Hellman moved to approve changes to the Six-Year Investment Program as recommended by the Six-Year Investment Program Committee. *Mr. Colvin* seconded.

MOTION APPROVED

(See presentations: Six-Year Investment Program Application and Program Update memo, Project Eligibility Criteria Committee Recommendations, Scoring Criteria spreadsheets)

Six-Year Investment Program Next Steps

Director DeLange reviewed the Six-Year Investment Program update and work plan memo, specifically looking at the proposed 2026 dates for review and feedback. The goal is to submit FMSIBs information to OFM to be included in the governor's proposed budget.

Mayor McEnerny-Ogle asked if there is information the board should be sharing with legislators in January 2026 while on the hill. Director DeLange confirmed that the committee work taking place now will lead to those recommendations.

Mr. Colvin added that it would be a good call-out for the board, particularly the Six-Year Investment Program Committee, to spend time crystallizing what FMSIBs priorities are and where we can have the greatest impact to achieve our value.

(See presentation: Six-Year Investment Program Update Work Plan memo)

WAC Review and Next Steps

Director DeLange provided a refresher from the WAC discussion at the workshop. She noted that FMSIB has repealed WACs that are no longer valid based off the changes in the 2023 legislation. Currently, staff is drafting WACs for the Six-Year Investment Program Committee to review and modify. Proposed WAC changes must be submitted by October 1, 2025, for a hearing to coincide with the November 2025 board meeting; she urged board members to submit comments and edits to her or Committee Chair Hellman.

(See presentation: Draft WAC Schedule and Next Steps memo)

Bylaw Changes

Director DeLange reviewed the changes the board adopted to the committee structure and membership during the November 2024 meeting. As a result of these changes, the FMSIB Bylaws must also be updated to reflect the new committees. Additionally, committee membership shifted, requiring board approval.

Chair Lentz sought a motion to approve the changes to the bylaws to reflect:

- Renaming of the Administrative Committee as the Executive Committee.
- Dissolving the Freight Policy Advisory Committee (FPAC) and establishing the Six-Year Investment Program Committee.
- Changing membership of the Six-Year Investment Program Committee to show that Commissioner McCarthy will be the primary member representing ports, with Leonard Barnes as the alternate.

Mr. Hellman moved to adopt the new committee structures in the revised FMSIB Bylaws. *Mayor McEnerny-Ogle* seconded.

MOTION APPROVED

(See presentation: Bylaws Updates memo)

Marine Cargo Forecast

Director DeLange recalled the Marine Cargo Forecast update from consultants at the workshop. The information and data presented in the final report and supporting port profiles may assist FMSIB Board Members in making future funding recommendations or updating the Six-Year Investment Program to better align with emerging freight needs. The main report, port profiles, and technical appendix will be available on the FMSIB website and requires adoption by the board.

Ms. Woehler asked for clarification on what it means for the board to adopt the Marine Cargo Forecast. Since the document is informational and not a recommendation, she is seeking affirmation that the board's action is to accept this product as informational versus actionable. *Chair Lentz* confirmed.

Councilmember Wick moved to accept the 2024 Marine Cargo Forecast and supporting documents. *Commissioner Wright* seconded the motion.

Mr. Colvin added that accepting the Marine Cargo Forecast is the right call as opposed to adopting it, as he feels the historical data is good but think they may have taken some leaps with their projections.

MOTION APPROVED

(See presentation: Final 2024 Marine Cargo Forecast Report memo)

Capital Budget Update

Jay Drye, Director of WSDOT Local Programs, and *Fred Wenhardt*, FMSIB Transportation Planning Specialist, provided an update on the capital budget and status of projects, including project progress photos.

Mr. Drye noted that many projects are closing out, and there is progress on the historical list of projects. At the next meeting, the new list of projects recommended to the legislature for the 2025-2027 biennium will begin populating and be added to the capital projects list. He also solicited feedback from the board on the format of the information provided.

Mr. Hansen suggested providing statistics and pictures of projects together for January 2026 legislative meetings to show progress.

Director DeLange added that the purpose of the new visual update piece is to make meetings more interactive while also preparing for the Six-Year Investment Committee. By encouraging recipients of funding to provide photos and documentation of projects, the board can better show improvements and why new projects need funding. This approach is similar to what other boards like the County Road Administration Board (CRAB), has done to demonstrate need to the legislature. It will also help recipients get used to sharing evidence and narratives that can later be presented to legislators to justify funding.

(See presentation: 2023-25 Capital Budget Summary and list of projects)

Operating Budget Update

Director DeLange addressed the operating budget spreadsheet reflecting the current standing of the FMSIB budget. FMSIB received funding for an outreach and engagement plan, and work on the RFP process will begin, which will be reflected in the July 2025 budget. Per discussion earlier in the meeting, staff will review and develop additional recommendations related to cost savings and meeting locations, which will be presented at the September 2025 board meeting.

(See presentation: FMSIB Operating Budget spreadsheet)

Truck Parking Update

Jason Beloso, Planning Program Manager of WSDOT Rail, Freight, and Ports Division, provided an update on the I-5 Fort Lewis Truck Parking and Weigh Station project, highlighting: purpose and need, phase 1 project status, design assumptions and milestones, next steps, and funding status/needs.

Commissioner French asked how much land is needed, and the construction cost for the truck parking portion (excluding the weigh station). *Mr. Beloso* explained the parking area alone is estimated at \$6-8 million for about 100 spots, but exact figures and costs without the weigh

station are still being determined. A bypass would be needed so trucks could access the lot independently.

Mr. Bennett noted the price seems lower than previously discussed and clarified past estimates may have included toilets and other features. He expressed enthusiasm about securing 100 parking spaces and asked about progress on intelligent transportation parking. *Mr. Beloso* explained that the multi-state award (Washington, Oregon, California) is being renegotiated since California withdrew due to rising costs. Washington is now exploring newer technologies—geofencing, AI applications, and drones for monitoring capacity—that could lower long-term maintenance costs.

Mr. Colvin noted that at the WTA conference, most vendors were moving toward geofencing smartphone-based systems rather than infrastructure-heavy models. *Mr. Beloso* agreed, emphasizing the benefits of lower long-term operations and maintenance.

(See presentation: I-5 Fort Lewis Truck Parking and Weigh Station PowerPoint)

Inland Intermodal Update

Mr. Wenhardt provided an update on the Inland Intermodal Feasibility Study outline originally presented at the March 2025 board meeting. Since that meeting, staff has expanded the outline to include new feedback from stakeholders, and additional case studies of existing inland ports. *Mr. Wenhardt* also provided an overview of the solicitation process for consultant support to identify key quantitative data, such as market demand analysis, cargo flows, and site-specific cases. The final report will provide infrastructure and policy recommendations that FMSIB may utilize while deliberating future project funding recommendations.

Mr. Bennett suggested staff confer with Portland Container on their inland intermodal work and Tidewater Barge Lines on the barging system.

Director DeLange reminded board members that one of the key elements of this study that *Mr. Wenhardt* is working on is to identify the policies and investment areas the board could be considering in the Six-Year Investment Program, such as reducing congestion, improving safety, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

There was discussion on not duplicating work that has already been done elsewhere and to utilize resources available through partnerships with The Northwest Seaport Alliance and data sets identified in the Marine Cargo Forecast.

(See presentation: Inland Intermodal Feasibility Draft Report and PowerPoint)

Next FMSIB Board Meeting

Mr. Bennett moved to affirm that the next FMSIB Board Meeting would be held September 19, 2025, in Walla Walla, Washington. *Mr. Snyder* seconded.

Mayor McEnerny-Ogle suggested moving the board meeting start time to 8:00 or 8:30 a.m. and ending earlier. Chair Lentz asked if there was a preference for a start time and Mr. Barnes suggested 8:00 a.m. Staff will work out details for meals.

MOTION APPROVED

The motion to approve the new board meeting start time of 8:00 a.m. passed. Members voting in favor were Mr. Barnes, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Colvin, Commissioner French, Mr. Hansen, Chair Lentz, Mayor McEnerny-Ogle, Mr. Snyder, Councilmember Wick, Ms. Woehler, and Commissioner Wright. Members voting against were Mr. Hellman.

Meeting Adjourned

Chair Lentz adjourned the meeting at 12:54 p.m.

Summary of Board Motions:

- 1) Motion to accept Board meeting minutes from March 21, 2025. Motion Carried. (Page 2)
- 2) Motion to approve Executive Director Brandy DeLange's COLA. Motion Carried. (Page 6)
- 3) Motion to approve changes to the Six-Year Investment Program. Motion Carried. (Page 8)
- 4) Motion to adopt the new committee structures for the FMSIB Bylaws. Motion Carried. (Page 9)
- 5) Motion to adopt the Marine Cargo Forecast. Motion Carried. (Page 9)
- 6) Affirmation of the next FMSIB Board Meeting on September 19, 2025 in Walla Walla, Washington. Motion Carried. (Page 11)


Temple Lentz
Board Chair


Attest: Brandy DeLange
Executive Director