



## **Government Affairs Committee: Looking Ahead!**

### **September 11, 2025 @ 10:30 am Teams**

#### **Overview**

- Legislative Fishing Day held August 22, featured state lawmakers including Senator Noel Frame and Representatives Josh Penner and Brian Burnett, enhancing advocacy for fishing access.
- Upcoming legislative session confirmed to start January 12, 2026, with bills allowed for pre-filing in December 2025; lobby day tentatively set for January 28–29.
- Kitsap County commissioners proposed new legislation for quicker derelict vessel removals, defining derelict vessels as those unregistered for two years or longer.
- OnBuoy's proposal for a buoy-sharing system showcased environmental benefits and received conditional support from Representative Reed, pending 2027 primary sponsorship.
- Public records turmoil continues within the Fish and Wildlife Commission; Commissioner Barb Baker announced she will not seek reappointment.
- Marina Boatyard Conference nearing sellout with significant registration; sessions include employment law updates and market insights presented by industry experts.
- Gig Harbor Marina reported \$30,000 expenditure due to derelict vessels since July, highlighting urgent operational challenges amid increased vessel abandonment.
- Heightened safety concerns raised regarding heater-related fires, as four incidents were reported in Gig Harbor last year, affecting insurance claim approvals.
- Political engagement includes a golf tournament to rebuild PAC funds and support for candidates in key district elections, strengthening NMTA political advocacy efforts.
- Biotoxin testing in Gig Harbor indicated poor water quality conditions, raising alarm on environmental and health impacts affecting the marina community.

#### **Notes**

**Opening and Introductions (00:00 - 04:03)**

- Jay Jennings opened the meeting with personal updates about his new puppy Cedar causing sleep disruption
- Complete round of introductions conducted with participants from various marinas, ports, and marine organizations including Sam LeClercq (LeClaire Marine), Wyatt Asbury (NMTA membership coordinator), Darren Austin (OnBuoy founder), Bob Wise (Olympic Peninsula marina owner and RBAWA president), and others

#### **Legislative Fishing Day Success (04:03 - 07:43)**

- Legislative fishing day held August 22nd with multiple state legislators participating
- Senator Noel Frame (Senate Finance Chair) attended with her son, along with Senator Keith Wagoner
- Representatives Josh Penner (31st district) and Brian Burnett (12th district) also participated
- Kerry Hoffman (guide association chair) led advocacy efforts regarding fishing access concerns with WDFW

#### **Upcoming Legislative Session Planning (07:43 - 09:43)**

- Session begins January 12th, 2026 – 60-day short session confirmed
- Bills can be pre-filed in December 2025
- Lobby day tentatively scheduled for January 28th-29th in Olympia, pending final confirmation
- Event planned before Seattle Boat Show opening on January 31st

#### **Derelict Vessel Legislation Discussion (09:43 - 15:01)**

- Kitsap County commissioners proposing legislation to expedite derelict vessel removal process
- New definition would include vessels not registered for more than two years and meeting other dereliction criteria
- Coalition building with Washington Association of Counties and Washington Public Ports Association
- Legislation aims to close loopholes where vessel owners move boats around to avoid removal

#### **OnBuoy Peer-to-Peer Mooring Proposal (15:37 - 24:50)**

- Darren Austin presented comprehensive legislation for private mooring buoy sharing system

- Proposal requires annual inspections and limits commercial activity to prevent over-commercialization
- Environmental benefits include reduced anchor drops in sensitive areas like eelgrass beds
- Puget Sound Keeper executive director interested in supporting the initiative
- Representative Reed agreed to co-sponsor but cannot primary sponsor until 2027 due to workload
- Action needed: Tribal consultation recommended by Tabitha Simonetti

#### **Fish and Wildlife Commission Updates (24:50 - 26:02)**

- Ongoing turmoil with public records requests and commissioner conflicts
- Commissioner Barb Baker announced she won't seek another term
- Larry Springer taking leadership on potential Ruckelshaus House study reforms

#### **Marina Boatyard Conference Updates (26:02 - 28:21)**

- Conference nearly sold out with significant registration demand
- Employment law session with Karen Cross as closing session Friday
- Chris Dolan and Gary Loftus presenting marine electrical updates Thursday
- Paul Sorensen providing market data on Puget Sound moorage conditions
- Marina panel with Dennis Halpin and Kate Anderson moderated by George Harris

#### **Operational Challenges and Solutions (30:34 - 44:08)**

- Patrick Thompson (Gig Harbor Marina) reported major derelict vessel issue costing \$30,000 since July 3rd
- Vessel owner abandoned boat after insurance claim denial due to unregistered status
- Changed emergency haul-out policy to direct derelicts to public docks first
- Bob Wise reported two abandoned vessels waiting months for voluntary turn-in program pickup
- Gig Harbor serviced 1,054 boats last year, expecting 200+ more this year
- Water quality issues identified with biotoxin testing showing poor conditions in Gig Harbor

#### **Safety and Insurance Concerns (37:26 - 41:08)**

- Sam LeClercq recommended photographing vessels upon arrival and sharing with insurance companies to document condition
- Patrick Thompson warned about heater-related fires - four fires in Gig Harbor last year

- Insurance companies denying claims for heaters without ABYC certified technician maintenance
- Webasto heater recalls from 2017 still affecting claims, with no nationwide recall database available
- Insurance market tightening with difficulty obtaining coverage and claim denials increasing

#### **Political Activities (41:39 - 43:53)**

- Golf tournament scheduled for Monday at Harbor Point to rebuild PAC funds
- Special elections in 5th district (Issaquah area) and 26th district (Gig Harbor area)
- NMTA PAC supported candidates in both races, including Krishnadason (bill sponsor) in Gig Harbor race

#### **Action items**

##### **Jay Jennings**

- Follow up with Patrick Thompson regarding derelict vessel case and DNR consultation (32:00)
- Contact DNR about Patrick's \$30,000 derelict vessel situation before conference (36:29)
- Coordinate with Trevor Justin and team on finalizing January 28th-29th lobby day dates (28:57)
- Organize internal meeting with Roman and Jay for lobby day planning (29:07)

##### **Darren Austin**

- Contact Tabitha Simonetti for tribal consultation guidance on mooring legislation (22:39)
- Schedule formal call with DNR's Mike Reckner to discuss OnBuoy proposal details (20:15)
- Continue securing primary sponsor for 2026 legislative session for mooring buoy sharing bill (23:17)

##### **Trevor Justin**

- Check with Andrea and Bob regarding lobby day scheduling conflicts (29:09)
- Coordinate with Jay Jennings on January lobby day planning meeting (29:07)

##### **George Harris**

- Follow up with Dennis Halpin regarding Elliott Bay Marina boat show dock space proposal (30:07)
- Continue recruiting for golf tournament foursome at Harbor Point (41:23)