Maritime Industry in Washington

Washington’s maritime industry is central to the economic and cultural history of the State. This industry has always been the backbone of our economy, providing the transportation critical to Washington’s resource extraction past. From otter pelts in the late 18th century to the Alaska Gold rush, ships from Seattle and Tacoma moved lumber and logs that built cities up and down the west coast. Ship builders supported military operations and continue to innovate with new vessels for port security and cargo movement. And, their work has created the fishing fleets that are capable of longer offshore trips and larger catch volumes of crab, halibut and salmon. 

Connections to the rest of the country began when the transcontinental railroad reached its terminus in Seattle, and today’s freight movement from port to rail to destination is a well-choreographed and profitable venture.

Washington’s Ferry System

Boasting 22 vessels, 450 daily departures and 22 million riders annually, Washington’s ferry system is the largest in the United States. These Ferries are an economic lifeline for many island communities, and a daily commute option for riders from Bainbridge, Vashon and Whidbey Islands.