

# 2026 AAPA Legislative Summit

*From Harbors to the Hill*

JW Marriott Washington, DC  
*Business casual attire is suggested.*

**Updated 3/3/26**

## Tuesday, March 3 All Times Listed are in EDT

<p>2:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. <i>1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Center 1201 Maryland Ave. SW Washington, DC 20024</i></p>	<p><b>Pre-Hill Day Briefing &amp; PPM Candidate In-Brief</b></p> <p>This briefing will provide participants with practical insights on how to effectively advocate on Capitol Hill. An experienced lobbyist will share lessons learned and strategies for communicating with policymakers, followed by an update from AAPA's Government Relations team on current federal priorities affecting ports. PPM Candidates should plan to attend. RSVP required.</p> <p><b>Featuring:</b></p>  <p><b>Drew Cole</b> Founder, DC Advocacy</p>
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## Wednesday, March 4 All Times Listed are in EDT

<p>7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. <i>Capitol Salon F-G</i></p>	<p><b>Hill Day Breakfast</b></p> <p><i>AAPA will host this mandatory briefing where necessary information about Hill Day will be covered for all participants!</i></p>
<p>9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. <i>Various on Capitol Hill</i></p>	<p><b>AAPA Hill Day on Capitol Hill</b></p>

<p>6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.  <i>Capitol Foyer</i></p>	<p><b>Welcome Reception</b>  <i>Featuring G-Wiz of the Washington Wizards</i></p> 
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**Thursday, March 5**  
 All Times Listed are in EDT

<p>8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  <i>Capitol Foyer</i></p>	<p><b>Registration Open</b></p>
<p>7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.  <i>Salon G</i></p>	<p><b>Networking Breakfast</b></p>
<p>7:50 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.  <i>Longworth</i></p>	<p><b>PPM Candidate Morning Meet-Up</b></p>
<p>8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.  <i>Cannon</i></p>	<p><b>U.S. Legislative Policy Council Meeting</b>  <i>(Only open to U.S. Port Members)</i></p>
<p>9:30 a.m. to 9:50 a.m.  <i>Capitol Foyer</i></p>	<p><b>Networking Coffee Break</b></p>
<p>9:50 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.  <i>Salon D</i></p>	<p><b>Opening Remarks from AAPA's Chairman</b>  <b>Chett Chiasson, Executive Director, Port of Fourchon</b></p>  <p><i>Open to the press</i></p>
<p>10:00 a.m. to 10:10 a.m.</p>	<p><b>Keynote: Arizona Senator Mark Kelly</b></p>

<p><i>Salon D</i></p>	<div data-bbox="578 228 834 552"></div> <p data-bbox="581 554 803 674"><b>Introduced by:</b> <b>Chett Chiasson</b> Executive Director Port of Fourchon</p> <div data-bbox="902 228 1219 552"></div> <p data-bbox="971 554 1112 642"><b>Mark Kelly</b> US Senator Arizona</p> <p data-bbox="393 774 621 804"><b><i>Open to the press</i></b></p>
<p>10:10 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. <i>Salon D</i></p>	<p data-bbox="393 837 1294 898"><b>Welcome to AAPA's Legislative Summit from AAPA's Vice President of Government Relations, John Bressler</b></p> <div data-bbox="735 928 1062 1255"></div> <p data-bbox="393 1289 621 1318"><b><i>Open to the press</i></b></p>
<p>10:30 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. <i>Salon D</i></p>	<p data-bbox="393 1352 1162 1381"><b>Keynote Address: MARAD Administrator, Stephen M. Carmel</b></p> <div data-bbox="740 1409 1058 1808"></div> <p data-bbox="393 1841 621 1871"><b><i>Open to the press</i></b></p>

<p>10:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.  <i>Salon D</i></p>	<p><b>Mainstage Panel—Keeping America's Harbors Open: The Water Resources Development Act in 2026</b></p> <p>The Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) is a cornerstone of federal support for the nation’s ports and waterways. As Congress begins work on WRDA 2026, this session will examine what’s at stake for port infrastructure, navigation dredging, and harbor maintenance nationwide.</p> <p>Panelists will outline the WRDA process and timeline, highlight key policy and funding priorities under consideration, and discuss how ports can engage early to ensure their needs are reflected. The session will also address emerging challenges—such as resilience, supply chain reliability, and project delivery—and how WRDA 2026 can help keep America’s harbors open and competitive.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Jason Block</b>              Area Manager,              Markets &amp;              Strategy North              America              Weeks Marine</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Gail              McSpadden              Greenman</b>              Federal Affairs              Manager              Port of Portland</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>William H.              Hanson</b>              Senior Vice              President of              Market              Development              Great Lakes              Dredge &amp; Dock</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Cam Rahmn-              Spencer</b>              Director of              Government              Relations              Port Houston</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Moderated by:              Adam Tindall-              Schlicht</b>              Sector Leader              for Ports,              Transportation              &amp; Infrastructure              Ramboll</p> </div> </div> <p><i>Open to the press</i></p>
<p>11:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.  <i>Salon D</i></p>	<p><b>Keynote: Chairman of the Federal Maritime Commission, Laura DiBella</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Introduced by:              Phyllis Saatohff</b>              Executive Director &amp; CEO              Port Freeport</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Laura DiBella</b>              Chairman  <b>Federal Maritime              Commission</b></p> </div> </div> <p><i>Open to the press</i></p>

<p>11:45 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.  <i>Salon D</i></p>	<p><b>Keynote: U.S. Customs and Border Protection Commissioner, Rodney S. Scott</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Introduced by:              Rich Hendrick</b>              CEO              Port of Albany</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Rodney S. Scott</b>              Commissioner              U.S. Customs and              Border Protection</p> </div> </div> <p><i>Open to the press</i></p>
<p>12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.  <i>Salon G</i></p>	<p><b>Networking Lunch</b></p>
<p>12:00 to 1:00 p.m.  <i>Longworth</i></p>	<p><b>Foundation for the Seaports of the Americas Board Lunch Meeting</b></p>
<p>12:00 to 1:00 p.m.  <i>Dirksen</i></p>	<p><b>Supply Chain Partners Luncheon              (Invite Only)</b></p>
<p>1:15 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.  <i>Salon D</i></p>	<p><b>Keynote &amp; Port Person of the Year Presentation              Congressman Mike Ezell – Representing Mississippi’s 4<sup>th</sup> District</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Mike Ezell</b>              Congressman              Mississippi 4th</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Mike O'Malley</b>              Chief Administrative Officer              DCLI</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Jon Nass</b>              CEO &amp; Executive Director              Port of Gulfport</p> </div> </div>

	<p><b>Port Person of the Year Award sponsored by DCLI</b></p>  <p><i>Open to the press</i></p>
<p>1:30 p.m. to 1:40 p.m. <i>Salon D</i></p>	<p><b>Keynote Address: Congresswoman Marie Gluesenkamp Perez – Representing Washington’s 3<sup>rd</sup> District</b></p>   <p><b>Introduced by:</b> <b>Julianna Marler</b> CEO Port of Vancouver (USA)</p> <p><b>Marie Gluesenkamp Perez</b> Congresswoman Washington 3rd</p> <p><i>Open to the press</i></p>
<p>1:40 p.m. to 1:50 p.m. <i>Salon D</i></p>	<p><b>Keynote Address: Rhode Island Senator, Sheldon Whitehouse</b></p> <p><b>Introduced by: William Brody, General Counsel at ProvPort</b></p>  <p><i>Open to the press</i></p>
<p>1:50 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. <i>Salon D</i></p>	<p><b>Mainstage Panel—Five Years of Funding: The Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill</b></p>

	<p>The Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill sets federal funding and policy direction for highways, transit, rail, and intermodal connections for the next five years —making it a critical issue for ports and freight mobility nationwide. As Congress turns its attention to the next reauthorization, this session will examine what ports need to know and what’s at stake for goods movement, last-mile connectivity, and multimodal infrastructure investment.</p> <p>Panelists will discuss key funding programs, policy priorities, and potential changes under consideration, as well as how ports can engage in the legislative process to ensure their needs are reflected. Attendees will gain timely insights into how the next surface transportation bill could shape port access, competitiveness, and long-term planning.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-end;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Zach Williams</b>              Legislative Correspondent at Bloomberg</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Hayden Crawford</b>              Legislative Director for Representative Randy Weber (TX-14)</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Jennifer Guthrie</b>              Director of Government Relations and External Affairs, Maryland Port Administration</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Paul Matthews</b>              VP Port Assets &amp; Strategic Partnerships, Bowman Consulting</p> </div> </div> <p><i>Open to the press</i></p>
<p>2:30 p.m. to 2:45 p.m.  <i>Capitol Foyer</i></p>	<p><b>Networking Coffee Break</b></p>
<p>2:50 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.  <i>Salon D</i></p>	<p><b>Keynote Address: Congressman Jake Auchincloss – Representing Massachusetts 4<sup>th</sup> District</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Introduced by:              Gordon Carr</b>              Executive Director              Port of New Bedford</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Jake Auchincloss</b>              Congressman              Massachusetts 4th</p> </div> </div>
<p>3:00 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.</p>	

<p><i>Salon D</i></p>	<p><b>Keynote Address: Congresswoman Val Hoyle – Representing Oregon’s 4<sup>th</sup> District</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Introduced by: Gail McSpadden Greenman</b> Federal Affairs Manager Port of Portland</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Val Hoyle</b> Congresswoman Oregon 4<sup>th</sup></p> </div> </div> <p><i>Open to the press</i></p>
<p>3:15 p.m. to 3:25 p.m. <i>Salon D</i></p>	<p><b>Keynote Address: Congressman Pete Stauber – Representing Minnesota’s 8<sup>th</sup> District</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Introduced by: Kevin Beardsley</b> Executive Director Duluth Seaway Port Authority</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Pete Stauber</b> Congressman Minnesota 8<sup>th</sup></p> </div> </div> <p><i>Open to the press</i></p>
<p>3:25 p.m. to 3:50 p.m. <i>Capitol Foyer</i></p>	<p><b>Networking Coffee Break</b></p>
<p>4:00 p.m. to 4:40 p.m. <i>Salon D</i></p>	<p><b>Mainstage Panel—Launching a New Generation of American Shipbuilding</b></p> <p>America’s maritime industry is entering a defining moment. As ports modernize, supply chains digitize, and global competition intensifies; the nation’s shipbuilding sector faces unprecedented opportunity - and pressure - to evolve. This forward-looking panel brings together industry leaders, innovators, port executives, and policymakers to explore what it will take to launch a new era of American ship construction and repair.</p>

	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">     </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>Geir Eilif Kalhagen</b>              Maritime Director              Texas Department              of Transportation</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>Vincent J. DiCosimo</b>              Senior Vice              President of              Government Affairs              Targa Resources</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>Paula Zorensky</b>              Vice President              Shipbuilders Council              of America</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>Moderated by:              Dan Ronan</b>              News Anchor              NPR &amp; WTOP</p> </div> </div> <p><b><i>Open to the press</i></b></p>
<p>4:40 p.m. to              4:55 p.m.  <i>Salon D</i></p>	<p><b>PPM Candidate Lightning Talks—ROUND 1</b></p> <p>Join us at the Mainstage, for some fast-paced, informative mini-presentations from a number of AAPA's PPM Candidates, covering their port's legislative priorities and ongoing projects.</p> <p><b><i>Open to the press</i></b></p>
<p>4:55 p.m. to              5:00 p.m.  <i>Salon D</i></p>	<p><b>Day 1 Closing Remarks</b></p> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;">  <p><b>Kristine Zortman</b>              Executive Director              Port of Redwood City</p> </div> <p><b><i>Open to the press</i></b></p>
<p>5:00 p.m. to              6:30 p.m.  <i>Penn Ave              Terrace              (Lobby Level)</i></p>	<p><b>Welcome to Washington Reception!</b></p>
<p>TBD</p>	<p><b>PPM Candidate Cohort Dinner</b></p>

<b>Friday, March 6</b> All Times Listed are in EDT	
8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. <i>Capitol Foyer</i>	<b>Registration Open</b>
7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. <i>Longworth</i>	<b>Board of Directors Breakfast Meeting</b>
8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. <i>Salon G</i>	<b>Networking Breakfast</b>
9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. <i>Cannon</i>	<b>Commissioner’s Symposium</b>  <b>Sponsored by</b>    <b>9:00 a.m.</b> <b>Welcome</b>  <b>9:15 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.</b> <b>From Stem to Stern: Clarifying Roles for Effective Port Governance</b> Strong, successful ports rely on clearly defined roles and mutual respect between board members, the CEO, and staff. In this interactive session, we'll explore the “what” and the “how” of port governance—what responsibilities belong to the board and what operational duties should be left to staff. Learn best practices for fostering transparency, trust, and accountability, and walk away with practical tips for effective communication, constructive problem-solving, and supporting your CEO without overstepping. Whether you're a commissioner, CEO, or senior staff member, this session will help ensure your agency runs a well-crewed ship—efficiently and in the same direction.    <div style="text-align: right;"> <b>Jason Hodge</b>                          Commissioner                          Port of Hueneme                     </div>
	<b>10:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.</b>

	<p><b>It's Time for Your Commission to Hire Your Next Port CEO: How to Approach this Critical Process</b></p> <p>Hear from a seasoned port executive search professional about some of the critical things to consider when bringing on a new Port leader.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When to use a search firm.</li> <li>• How does succession planning come into play?</li> <li>• Creating a clear vision for the qualifications you're seeking and strong alignment among the board.</li> <li>• Uncovering the "backstory" on candidates before you hire and ensuring alignment between the board and your new leader.</li> <li>• Ensuring transparency AND confidentiality in the process.</li> </ul>  <p><b>Sue Dvnoch</b>          Managing Partner          Shey-Harding Executive Search</p> <p><b>10:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.</b>  <b>AAPA Legislative Update</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div data-bbox="457 1008 646 1197">  <p><b>John Bressler</b>              Vice President of              Government              Relations</p> </div> <div data-bbox="738 1008 870 1203">  <p><b>Ian Gansler</b>              Director of              Government              Relations</p> </div> <div data-bbox="984 1008 1127 1203">  <p><b>Shawn Balcomb</b>              Public Affairs              Director</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1243 1008 1375 1203">  <p><b>Holden Haley</b>              Government              Relations Manager</p> </div> </div>
<p>9:00 a.m. to              10:30 a.m.  <i>Dirksen</i></p>	<p><b>Harbors &amp; Navigation Committee Meeting</b></p> <p>Ryan Hambleton (Staff Director, House of Representatives Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee, Majority staff) and Ryan Seiger (Staff Director, House of Representatives Water Resources and Environment Minority staff) will be joining us to discuss the latest developments on the WRDA bill. This is an excellent opportunity to voice your priorities directly to the key House staff that are drafting the WRDA bill!</p>
<p>9:00 a.m. to              10:00 a.m.  <i>Longworth</i></p>	<p><b>North Atlantic Caucus Meeting</b></p>
<p>10:00 a.m. to              11:00 a.m.  <i>Longworth</i></p>	<p><b>Gulf Caucus Meeting</b></p>

<p>10:30 a.m. to                  11:00 a.m.  <i>Capitol B Office</i></p>	<p><b>PPM Out Brief</b></p>
<p>11:00 a.m. to                  11:05 a.m.  <i>Salon D</i></p>	<p><b>Welcome Back</b></p>  <p><b>Shannon McLeod, Vice President of Member Services, AAPA</b></p> <p><i>Open to the press</i></p>
<p>11:05 a.m. to                  11:20 a.m.  <i>Salon D</i></p>	<p><b>PPM Candidate Lightning Talks—ROUND 2</b></p> <p>Join us at the Mainstage, for some fast-paced, informative mini-presentations from a number of AAPA’s PPM Candidates, covering their port’s legislative priorities and ongoing projects.</p> <p><i>Open to the press</i></p>
<p>11:20 a.m. to                  12:00 p.m.  <i>Salon D</i></p>	<p><b>Building an Integrated Counter-Drone Framework for Maritime Security</b></p> <p>The rapid evolution of unmanned aircraft system threats, ranging from surveillance and disruption to coordinated swarm activity, poses growing risks to United States ports and the maritime supply chain. This panel will explore how seaports can operate effectively within the emerging federal counter UAS framework shaped by the Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act, including the Safer Skies Act expansion of Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice authorities, and the forthcoming Federal Aviation Administration Section 2209 rulemaking establishing standards for restricted airspace, operations, privacy protections, and coordination with non-federal partners. Panelists will examine the role of the new Joint Interagency Task Force for Counter UAS, lessons learned from recent exercises and real world disruptions, and how implementation choices will determine whether ports face a coordinated layered defense or a fragmented patchwork of authorities, highlighting practical steps to clarify roles, strengthen interagency coordination, and improve operational readiness in complex port environments.</p> <p><b>Moderated by:</b> <b>Panelists:</b></p>    

	<p><b>Holden Haley</b>                  Government Relations Manager at AAPA</p> <p><b>Mark Dubina</b>                  VP, Security at Port Tampa Bay</p> <p><b>Michael Goldschmidt,</b>                  Assistant Director of Security, Port of Long Beach</p> <p><b>Jennifer Daskal</b>                  Partner at Venable LLP</p> <p><i>Open to the press</i></p>
<p>12:00 p.m. to 12:05 p.m.  <i>Salon D</i></p>	<p><b>Closing Remarks &amp; Thanks for Joining Us!</b></p>  <p><b>Rich Hendrick, CEO, Port of Albany</b></p>
<p>12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.  <i>Salon G</i></p>	<p><b>Networking Coffee &amp; Snack Break</b></p>
<p>12:30 to 1:45 p.m.  <i>Longworth</i></p>	<p><b>Joint Finance &amp; Admin + Economic Development Committee Meeting</b></p> <p>Join the F&amp;A and ED committees to discuss multiple hot topic issues from maritime action plans to maritime prosperity zones and more!</p>