Murray lauds Harbor efforts

By [Steven Friederich](#) - The Daily World

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U.S. Sen. Patty Murray credited an earmark included in a federal appropriations bill for funding infrastructure improvements to Port Industrial Road.

Murray secured $3.8 million in an omnibus appropriations bill approved last year that is being used today to create new turn lanes and altering intersections along the Port Industrial Road to improve safety and traffic flow.

The funds will also be used to improve the flow of rail lines as trains move through the Port.

"This is what an earmark is supposed to be," Murray said. "For all the ones you hear about that have become stories, this is exactly why I go to work every day, to fight to make sure when

JACOB JONES | THE DAILY WORLD U.S. Sen. Patty Murray and Gary Nelson, executive director of the Port of Grays Harbor, listen to an update on jobs and development challenges during an economic development meeting Tuesday at the Port offices.

your community comes together and you just need a small amount of federal money to get you going."

Murray conducted an "invite only" meeting with members from the Port, the county, the PUD, Grays Harbor College and several private companies, including Paneltech LLC, Imperium Grays Harbor and the Pasha Group, which recently awarded a transportation contract to the Port of Grays Harbor to move cars in and out of Grays Harbor Marine Terminal 4.

Local officials briefed Murray on the events of the county and thanked her for her unwavering support.

"You are a good news story," Murray told the local officials.

She said the Port Industrial Road project is a perfect example of the community coming together behind a single project to get money.

"I do get hundreds of requests, far more than we can ever, ever accommodate, and I look directly to what all of you did, as a community that is working really good together, that is looking at the long-term, the short-term," Murray said. "You have a project here that creates access and new, private

leverage. This project has everything."

Michael Pasha, the general manager of port development for the Pasha Group, told Murray that the Port Industrial Road improvements will help his business.

Pasha plans to ship as many as 25,000 vehicles through the Port, heading to Asia and Australia.

Pasha told Murray that he felt China was a growing market and even more cars could be sent out of the Port.

"At our San Diego facility we have 300 to 400 employees and that's a mature operation and we expect that here," he said. "More jobs and more highly skilled work."

"Do you train your employees?" Murray asked.

"Yeah, we do," he replied. "We send people up to our operations for a training program."

Grays Harbor College President Ed Brewster talked about the college's own recent training efforts. He noted the college has been dealing with record enrollment, even as the Legislature cut its budget by about 12 percent last year. The college faces about a 6 percent budget cut this year, he said.

Mike Kennedy, the executive director of the Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council, thanked Murray for a $1.2 billion jobs program, which provided employment for young people last summer all across the nation, including Grays Harbor. Kennedy is hoping Murray will be successful in getting the $1.3 billion to re-start the program this summer.

Kennedy also asked Murray to make it easier for WorkSource centers to work hand-in-hand with community colleges.

"We want the ability to contract directly with Brewster, that ability to deal with him directly," Kennedy said.

"You have excellent timing as senators are working on the workforce bill right now," she replied.

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