**FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN**  
**WASHINGTON STATE IMPACTS**  
**January 2019**

- **Threatening Disruption to Washington State Ferry Service.** Furloughs have left the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) operating with extremely limited staff in Washington, putting service at risk for several vessels in the Washington State Ferries (WSF) fleet that are up for inspection during the months of January and February. In order to sail, each vessel is required to undergo an annual inspection by USCG to ensure full compliance with federal and state laws and continue to carry passengers. At least two WSF vessels are due for annual inspections during the week of January 21, MV Chimacum and MV Chelan. At least two additional vessels are due for inspection later this month and early February, MV Salish and MV Tillicum. These vessels currently service the Seattle/Bremerton, Fauntleroy/Vashon/Southworth, Port Townsend/Keystone and San Juans routes. If the annual inspections on these boats are not completed, they would need to be removed from service and ferry service could be impacted. Additionally, if another vessel is removed from service due to a mechanical or system malfunction, an inspection may be required by the USCG before the vessel is cleared to return to service, which could further impact ferry service for Washingtonians.

- **Delaying NTSB Final Report on DuPont Amtrak Derailment.** Furloughs of accident investigators at the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) have forced the agency to halt investigations into transportation accidents across the country, including the Amtrak train derailment that occurred near DuPont, Washington, in December 2017. The agency’s preliminary report into the accident was released in January 2018, and its final report is expected sometime this spring. Amtrak train service has been suspended along the route until the final report is released. A potential delay of NTSB’s work could further delay passenger service along the Point Defiance Bypass route.

- **Putting Basic Food Assistance at Risk.** If the shutdown continues through March, low-income Washingtonians who rely on basic food through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are at risk of losing benefits they need to put food on the table. Although USDA has instructed states to take extraordinary steps to disburse SNAP benefits early for the month of February, they have not identified federal appropriations necessary to continue the program beyond then — threatening disruption to basic food for over 900,000 individuals in Washington, more than 59 percent of whom are in families with children.

- **Threatening Income Security for Low-Income Washingtonians.** Federal appropriations for Washington’s families in need through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is only sufficient to cover benefits through the end of February. Although state funding may be available to continue providing some TANF assistance through part of March, it cannot cover full benefits for another month — meaning the state may be forced to send out 10-day notice letters on February 18 notifying families of a cut-off for their monthly issuance.

- **Delaying Hanford Cleanup Efforts.** Furloughs of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) personnel, who serve as partner regulators alongside our state Department of Ecology, are causing current and near-term delays to cleanup decision processes at Hanford. These include changes to Tri-Party Agreement milestones and a potential enforcement action that would require coordination with EPA. The delays are associated with unavailability of EPA staff to brief EPA Region 10 Administrator
for certain required EPA approvals. The delays will directly impact issuance of regulatory decisions, delaying initiation of cleanup processes for mixed low level and transuranic mixed waste.

- **Disrupting Environmental Restoration.** Furloughs of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) staff is delaying work on environmental restoration efforts by our state Department of Ecology, such as work on Chehalis Basin aquatic restoration plans and state and federal environmental impact statements (EIS), which depend on NOAA staff to work on integral fish and habitat monitoring.

- **Halting Applications for Federal Financial Student Aid.** Students’ applications for federal financial aid submitted after the shutdown began on December 22 have been disrupted by the closed federal agencies — including IRS and the Department of Homeland Security — which are necessary for data-verification of FAFSA forms. These students have received a comment code that denotes, “One or more federal agency matches were not performed.” The disruptions could delay Pell grants, student loans, parent PLUS loans and other forms of federal financial aid from reaching students. New students planning on attending our state’s public universities starting in the spring or next fall may be impacted. It may also impact our public universities’ ability to process financial aid for these low and middle-income families. To date, little to no guidance has been issued by the U.S. Department of Education to this situation.

- **Threatening the Emergency Food Supply for Hungry Families.** The lapse in appropriations for USDA may impact Washingtonians who rely on our state’s emergency food system and contractors’ ability to provide distribution services to food pantries and meal systems. We anticipate that food commodities ordered by USDA before the shutdown, but not yet purchased, will not be delivered during the shutdown. For Washingtonians, that means approximately 324,000 pounds of commodity foods with a value of $201,000 were ordered but USDA had not completed the purchasing process — leaving food pantries with less food to distribute and diminishing basic food for families who need it. Additionally, no operational funds will be provided for these foods prior to April 2019, which means our contractors will be distributing these foods without any operational funding.

- **Putting Food Safety at Risk.** Due to furloughs of Food and Drug Administration (FDA) staff, the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) is unable to receive technical assistance from the FDA. Lack of federal food safety inspections may be increasing food safety risks in the state. FDA training that our state agency staff were planning to attend has also been cancelled.

- **Disrupting Ecosystem Restoration Projects.** Furloughs and federal agency closures are delaying and threatening to disrupt projects in progress. Among those include the Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project, which has been awarded $3.2 million in federal grant money but requires the funds to be disbursed and federal permits to be obtained by April 1 for the project to be constructed as planned this summer. According to the state Department of Fish and Wildlife, there is an urgency to proceed with the project due to the failing dikes; if they fail before the project is completed, it will be very expensive to build a wave protection berm on the site that is needed to protect the adjacent City of Stanwood from coastal flooding.

- **Disrupting Washington Fisheries.** Efforts that have been or may be disrupted during the shutdown include: National Marine Fisheries Service’s (NMFS) participation in the North of Falcon process to set recreational and commercial salmon setting seasons while considering Chinook and concurrently Southern Resident Killer Whale recovery objectives; NMFS’s enforcement capability and oversight
integral to the conservation of Washington’s fisheries; and the rulemaking processes pertinent to the establishment of catch limits for the Pacific whiting midwater trawl fisheries and the Pacific halibut fishery. These actions are not only critical to the conservation of various fish stocks, but also to the economic welfare of the recreational and commercial fishing communities that are dependent upon the processes.

- **Disrupting Assistance for Victims of Crime and Domestic Violence.** The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) has notified the state that cash disbursement systems will not be operational beyond January 18 for crime victims programs, programs to end violence against women, sexual assault prevention programs, and domestic violence legal advocacy programs — leaving the state responsible for backfilling funding to continue these important programs that should be a federal responsibility.