

U.S. SENATOR MARIA CANTWELL

WASHINGTON

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: [BRYAN WATT](#)

JULY 20, 2018

(202) 224-8277

Cantwell Announces Investment in Freeland Shipyard

New grant will allow Nichols Brothers Boat Builders to purchase 250-ton large crawler crane to expand business, support American manufacturing jobs

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA), a senior Democrat on the Senate Commerce Committee, announced that Nichols Brothers Boat Builders (NBBB), a shipyard in Freeland, WA, received a grant for \$1.3 million dollars from the U.S. Department of Transportation’s (DOT) Small Shipyard Grant Program.

The grant will allow Nichols Brothers to purchase a new 250-ton, U.S.-built crane, which will help the yard to expand its business, maintain its competitiveness, and continue to support local jobs. Senator Cantwell wrote a [letter](#) to the administrator of DOT’s Maritime Administration (MARAD) to support the grant application.

“This project will help sustain important passenger and vehicle ferry transportation links to rural island communities, as well as benefit American manufacturing and local shipyard jobs,” Senator Cantwell said. “I am pleased Nichols Brothers Boat Builders has received this important funding, and I will continue working to support Washington state’s maritime economy in the Senate.”

“On behalf of everyone at Nichols Brothers, we would like to thank the Senator and the entire delegation for their support on this project,” said Gavin Higgins, CEO of Nichols Brothers Boat Builders. “The support of the MARAD grant will complement other investments that we continually make to the facility and employees to make the shipyard safe and competitive. This support goes directly to help support the maritime industry and grow jobs in Freeland.”

Nichols Brothers Boat Builders works on ferries for the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), and the Crane Upgrade Project will help sustain the ferry service that provides important links to many of the state’s rural island communities. WSDOT operates the largest ferry system in the United States – its 24 ferries in the Puget Sound and the state’s inland waterways moved more than 23 million passengers in 2015, transporting residents and visitors to destinations such as tourist attractions, workplaces, and commercial centers.

Senator Cantwell has consistently [advocated](#) for full funding for the Small Shipyard Grant Program. Washington state’s shipyards and maritime industry are crucial to the state’s economy. As of 2015, shipbuilding, repair, and maintenance jobs employed roughly 18,700 Washington workers and added more than \$900 million in revenue to the state’s economy.