



**WASHINGTON
AEROSPACE
PARTNERSHIP**

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Leaders to campaign for state's aerospace jobs Business, labor and local governments join forces to attract military tanker

A broad-based coalition of interests has come together under the banner of the Washington Aerospace Partnership (Partnership) to mount a unified effort to ensure that Washington remains the leading location in the world for aerospace.

“Our region has not only the highest skilled aerospace workforce in the world, but also the highest concentration of aerospace jobs – jobs that are at risk today,” said Rick Bender, President of the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO and one of three Partnership co-chairs. “Washington is being challenged like never before by other regions, both here and abroad. They want the high-paying jobs and improved quality of life that comes with the aerospace industry.”

Other regions have coordinated, sophisticated and well-financed efforts to market to the aerospace industry, according to Tayloe Washburn, chair of the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce and a Partnership co-chair.

“A group of us just returned from a study visit to Montreal, where we had an eye-opening look at what that region is doing across the board to keep and attract aerospace companies,” Washburn said. “We can’t afford to take what we have for granted. We have to compete very strategically to keep what we have.”

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Co-chair Bob Drewel, executive director of the Puget Sound Regional Council, said the aerospace industry benefits every county in Washington. “People tend to associate aerospace with just Boeing,” Drewel said. “But we have 650 aerospace companies operating in 28 counties in Washington. Large and small aerospace companies, and the companies they buy from, employ more than 200,000 people and provide more than \$5 billion in wages.”

The most urgent task is to mobilize support for Boeing’s bid to build the military’s refueling tankers, according to the Partnership’s leadership.

The Partnership will work closely with the Washington Council on Aerospace (WCA), recently created by Gov. Chris Gregoire to coordinate state government departments, the Aerospace Futures Alliance (AFA), an industry-sponsored group, and other interested parties.

“The Washington Aerospace Partnership is the third leg of the stool,” Washburn said. “The industry alliance will advise on what is needed to attract aerospace. The state council will develop the necessary policies. And, the Partnership will advocate for both of them. Our members – business owners, labor organizations, civic leaders and citizens across the state have a lot at stake in what happens to the aerospace industry. The Partnership will serve as a catalyst to grow our state’s aerospace industry and to create more family-wage jobs for the future.”

For more information, visit www.washington-aerospace.com.

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