

## [Cantwell to Attend First Senate Hearing on Tsunami Debris Response](#)

### Local News

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Washington D.C. - On Thursday, May 17th at 10:30 A.M., U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) will attend the first Senate oversight hearing on tsunami debris response. Cantwell will urge more action to protect Washington state's coastal economy, during a Senate Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard hearing entitled "Stemming the Tide: the U.S. Response to Tsunami-Generated Marine Debris." After a devastating earthquake and tsunami struck Japan on March 11, 2011, an enormous amount of debris was washed out to sea. One year later, very little is known about the composition of the debris and there is currently no federal plan in place to address a large-scale marine debris event such as the approaching tsunami debris. Cantwell has been a leading advocate of getting an aggressive plan in place to address the threat tsunami debris poses to Washington state's coastal economy and communities. The state's coastal economy supports 165,000 jobs and produces \$10.8 billion in economic activity each year.

Last November, Cantwell [secured](#) Senate Commerce Committee passage of an amendment that would identify the debris as a unique threat and require the Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere to develop an interagency action plan to help prepare our region for this potentially serious problem. On March 7th, Cantwell [urged](#) the head of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to step up programs to analyze the potential danger of tsunami debris. And on March 30th in Seattle, Cantwell and Senator Mark Begich (D-AK) [called on President Obama](#) to allocate emergency resources to mobilize National Science Foundation (NSF) research to help track and respond to tsunami debris. Expediting NSF grants would help coastal communities get more specific estimates of what might hit shores — and when. **Who:** U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) David Kennedy, Assistant Administrator, National Ocean Service, NOAA Rear Admiral Carl Thomas, Director of Response Policy, U.S. Coast Guard **When:** Thursday, May 17, 2012 at 10:30 a.m. Eastern **Where:** Russell Senate Office Building, Room 253, Washington, D.C. \*\*Reporters not able to attend the hearing in person may tune in via live webcast on the Senate Commerce Committee's [website](#). Refresh the Commerce Committee homepage 10 minutes prior to the scheduled start time to automatically begin streaming the webcast.