

## **Cantwell Statement on Tsunami-Blown Dock on WA State Beach**

### **Local News**

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) issued the following statement in response to the discovery of a massive Japanese dock on a Washington state beach located within the Olympic National Park boundary. The dock has been floating at sea since the devastating earthquake and tsunami struck Japan on March 11, 2011. According to initial estimates, the dock is 60 feet long, 19 feet wide, 7 feet tall, and weighs at least 188 tons. **“I applaud the U.S. Coast Guard and state and federal officials for working around the clock to locate and respond to the threat posed by this tsunami debris, as well as the Quinault Indian Nation for their assistance with monitoring and response,”** Cantwell said. **“While officials continue to respond to the situation, it is important to monitor for any invasive species that may be attached to the dock and threaten our marine life.”** **“This massive Japanese dock washing up on Washington’s shores is yet another reminder that the federal government needs an aggressive plan in place to protect Washington coastal communities and jobs from approaching tsunami debris,”** Cantwell continued. **“The debris from the tragic tsunami in Japan is a national problem that demands a national solution. The time is now to mobilize appropriate federal resources for planning and response.”** The dock was confirmed as tsunami debris earlier this week by a researcher working under a RAPID National Science Foundation (NSF) grant. The researcher used a photograph of the dock taken by a fisherman to identify the dock and its origin. At the [request](#) of Senators Cantwell and Mark Begich (D-AK), President Obama mobilized the RAPID emergency research grants earlier this year to help track and respond to tsunami debris.

Cantwell has been a leading proponent of getting a comprehensive plan in place that addresses the threat posed by tsunami debris. Last week, the Senate passed legislation containing several key provisions championed by Cantwell, including an [amendment](#) that would elevate national attention on tsunami debris. Cantwell’s amendment would direct the head of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to form an interagency task force to develop a tsunami debris cleanup plan, if the head of NOAA determines that the debris constitutes a “severe marine debris event.” NOAA’s administrator must determine if the debris constitutes a “severe marine debris event” within 30 days of the bill becoming law. The legislation, *The Coast Guard Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 2012 and 2013* ([HR 2838](#)), is currently pending before President Obama to become law. In addition to pushing for a debris removal plan, Cantwell also is working to secure federal support for cleanup. On December 10, 2012, Cantwell joined five other senators in a bipartisan request for a \$20 million federal investment for debris removal [in a letter](#) to the chair and ranking member of the Senate Committee on Appropriations. Cantwell has long maintained that the states alone should not bear the financial burden of cleanup. With the current situation, the massive Japanese dock washed up on a Washington state beach located on federal land, which would make it the federal government’s responsibility to address. On May 17, 2012, during the first tsunami debris oversight hearing, Cantwell [demanded](#) answers of NOAA on what the nation’s plan is to address and respond to tsunami debris. Cantwell continues to fight to ensure the federal government recognizes the threat posed by tsunami debris and mobilizes an

aggressive response and resources for monitoring and cleanup. Washington state's coastal economy supports 165,000 jobs and produces \$10.8 billion in economic activity each year.