



Water Transportation Advisory Board

Tuesday, June 22, 2026
10:00 AM to 12:00 PM ET/9:00AM to 11:00AM CT



Agenda:

Welcome and Introductions

Public Comment Period (2-3 minutes max)

Presentation of Minutes from December 3, 2025, meeting

Discussion of HB 501 funding and FY 27 Kentucky Riverport Improvement (KRI) program

Discussion of HB 900 funding and FY 27 Kentucky Public Riverport Construction and Maintenance (KPRCM) program

Discussion of status of Economic Impact of Kentucky's Ports and Waterways study

Discussion of next WTAB Meeting

Adjournment



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Water Transportation Advisory Board (WTAB)
December 3, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Approved by WTAB (date): _____

The meeting of the Water Transportation Advisory Board (WTAB) was called to order at 2:02 PM on Wednesday, December 3, held virtually.

The WTAB members in attendance were:

Brian Wright, Chair
Billy Ray Coursey, Vice Chair
Chuck Davis
Jerry Pace

Amanda Davenport
Wayne Cassidy
Miguel Zamora

Also, in attendance were:

Jeremy Edgeworth, KYTC
Ben Weithman, Henderson Riverport
Eric Patton, Greenup Boyd Riverport
Greg Curlin, Hickman Riverport
Jim Garrett, Paducah Riverport
Sheryl Chino, HDR
Shelly Byrne, Waterways Journal
Mikael Pelfrey, KYTC

Jay Balaji, KYTC
Jake Rice, KYTC
Jennifer Kirchner, KBT
Oliver Douthitt, GEO Consultants
Rob Fortier, Paducah Riverport
Lauren O'Brien, Verdantas
Vinay Polepalli, HMB
Shanna G. (unknown)

Welcome and Introductions:

The Chair welcomed all in attendance and all attendees introduced themselves.

Public Comment Period:

The Chair invited all attendees to make comments. No public comments were made.

Presentation of Minutes from June 20, 2025

The minutes of the June 20, 2025, meeting were presented and subsequently unanimously approved on motion of Amanda Davenport, seconded by Jerry Pace.

Update on Status of Open and Closed KRI projects

Jeremy Edgeworth presented a PowerPoint presentation of open and closed KRI projects and invited representatives from the Riverports to discuss the status of their projects.

- Greg Curlin (Hickman Riverport)-Spreader Bar and Coil Hooks Project- Project will design and construct new spreader bar and coil hooks for unloading different size wire coils from barges. Bid process has been completed and vendor has started on fabrication.
- Miguel Zamora (Louisville Riverport)-Caterpillar 255 Skid Steer Project-Project replaced leased skid steer with 2025 hours with a new CAT 255 on statewide master agreement. Skid steer has been delivered, closeout in progress.
- Amanda Davenport (Eddyville Riverport)-Port Authority Road Paving Project-Project resurfaced 4,500 ft of port road. Paving and stripping is complete, KYTC inspection this week.
- Ben Weithman (Henderson Riverport)-Dock Staging Pad Project-Project will construct a 3,000 sq ft pad for the new material handler to load trucks. Contractor is in the process of forming up the pad area for concrete.
- Miguel Zamora (Louisville Riverport)-Barge Cover Handling System Project-Project will purchase a mechanical barge cover handling system. Estimate bids will go out around Christmas.

December 3, 2025, Minutes



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FY 2027 & FY 2028

HB 501

- *HB 501, Part I, A, 1(4) Riverport Improvements: Included in the above General Fund appropriation is \$500,000 in each fiscal year to the Riverport Financial Assistance Trust Fund (KRS 174.210).*
 - \$500,000 in each Fiscal Year
- *KRS 174.210 (3) The purpose of the riverport financial assistance trust fund shall be to improve riverport facilities and infrastructure, to capture the economic and trade potential offered by water transportation. To the extent funds are available, the fund shall make grants to riverport authorities for new construction and major replacement or repair projects, including but not limited to improvement of docks, wharves, equipment, port buildings, storage facilities, roads and railroads to facilitate the flow of commerce through the port, other on-site improvements, and related professional services. Eligible projects shall not include routine operations, maintenance, or repair activities.*
- *KRS 174.210 (4) Notwithstanding KRS 45.229, moneys remaining in the fund at the close of a fiscal year shall not lapse but shall carry forward into the succeeding fiscal year. Interest earned on any moneys in the fund shall accrue to the fund. Amounts from the fund shall be disbursed and expended in accordance with this section.*

FY 2027 & FY 2028

HB 501

- *KRS 174.210 (5) To be eligible for a grant under this section, the applicant shall provide at least a twenty percent (20%) match, which may be obtained from any public or private source.*
- *KRS 174.210 (6)*
 - *(a) Grant applications shall be reviewed and awarded annually.*
 - *(b) The Transportation Cabinet shall submit all applications to the Water Transportation Advisory Board established by KRS 174.200 for evaluation and recommendations prior to awarding any grant funding under this section.*
 - *(c) Priority shall be given to applicants with a riverport master plan, for capital intensive projects for which permits have been obtained, and for projects for which matching funds have been obtained.*
- *KRS 174.210 (7) The Transportation Cabinet shall submit on an annual basis a report detailing all grants awarded under this section to the Water Transportation Advisory Board, the Interim Joint Committee on Transportation, and the Interim Joint Committee on Appropriations and Revenue.*

FY 2027 & FY 2028

Kentucky Riverport Improvement (KRI)

- Utilize Kentucky Riverport Improvement (KRI) program to administer HB 501 funds. Minimal changes to KRI program. Update guidance document to match KRS 174.210 language (project types, match, etc.).
- Add ability to apply for KRI as match to federal grants, if project type matches 174.210(3).
- Similar application process, issue call for projects, WTAB review and make recommendations to Secretary.
- Timing of KRI, wait until May-June 2027 to allow KPRCM funds to be issued first. Issue call for 2027 and 2028 KRI funds at one time.
- Discussion/questions?



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FY 2027 & FY 2028

HB 900/SB 197

- *HB 900 (24) / SB 197 (54) There is hereby appropriated General Fund moneys from the Budget Reserve Trust Fund Account (KRS 48.705) in the amount of \$15,100,000 in fiscal year 2026-2027 and \$14,500,000 in fiscal year 2027-2028 to the General Administration and Support budget unit in the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet to improve public riverports within Kentucky as authorized by KRS 65.520 and for eligible use as described in KRS 174.210(3). No local match shall be required.*
- *\$15,100,000 in FY 27, no carry over authority*
- *\$14,500,000 in FY 28, no carry over authority*
- *KRS 174.210 (3) ...shall make grants to riverport authorities for new construction and major replacement or repair projects, including but not limited to improvement of docks, wharves, equipment, port buildings, storage facilities, roads and railroads to facilitate the flow of commerce through the port, other on-site improvements, and related professional services. Eligible projects shall not include routine operations, maintenance, or repair activities.*
- *No local match*

FY 2027 & FY 2028

Kentucky Public Riverport Construction and Maintenance (KPRCM)

- Utilize Kentucky Public Riverport Construction and Maintenance (KPRCM) program to administer HB 900/SB 197 funds.
- Update guidance document/application to mirror HB 900/SB 197 language and changes proposed below.
- Timing: issue call mid 2026 due to no carry over authority. Funds must be under contract between KYTC and Riverport Authority by the end of the FY to protect funds.
- Changing application process to streamline.
 - KYTC will issue emailed call for Letters of Intent (LOI) to all riverport authorities with 2-week deadline.
 - Interested Riverport Authorities would provide email back to KYTC by stated deadline indicating:
 - How much they will be requesting and brief (two to three line) description of the project.
 - Riverport Authorities can submit multiple LOI's to KYTC under separate emails.
 - After two-week deadline, KYTC will review submitted LOI's to determine if there are enough projects to utilize the full FY appropriation.
 - If not enough LOI's, KYTC will issue call for additional LOI until it exceeds FY appropriation.
 - If enough LOI's, KYTC will respond back to those that have submitted a LOI instructing them to complete the full KPRCM application in 30 days.
 - Full KPRCM applications will be submitted to WTAB for review and scoring.



FY 2027 & FY 2028

Kentucky Public Riverport Construction and Maintenance (KPRCM)

- WTAB Review process is changing, implementing individual project scoring matrix

Category	Points
Criticality & Transportation Impact	25
Economic Development Impact	20
Project Readiness & Deliverability	15
Safety, Resiliency & Preservation	15
Financial Leverage & Partnership	10
Strategic Importance to Kentucky	10
Developing Riverport Bonus	5
TOTAL	100

- During the WTAB board member review of KPRCM applications, each project will be scored on seven criteria.

FY 2027 & FY 2028

Kentucky Public Riverport Construction and Maintenance (KPRCM)

- During WTAB meeting, board members can ask questions of all applicants
- As in the past, WTAB board members would vote on eligibility of each project (adherence to KRS 174.210).
- WTAB board members would then finalize scores and send to KYTC for tabulation.
- KYTC would share rankings with WTAB attendees
- As in the past, discussions may need to be held on projects on the bubble for funding and ability to accept partial funding.
- WTAB board would finalize KPRCM award recommendations for the Secretary.

FY 2027 & FY 2028

Kentucky Public Riverport Construction and Maintenance (KPRCM)

Criticality & Transportation Impact — 25 Points

Evaluates how significantly the project will impact port operations, multimodal connectivity, and Kentucky's freight transportation network.

Considerations:

- Critical to maintain daily port operations or moves port forward.
- Increases ports freight capacity or operational efficiency;
- Reduction in truck vehicle miles traveled (VMT) or congestion;
- Intermodal connectivity (rail/highway/water);
- Supply chain significance;
- Regional or statewide transportation impact;
- Support for critical industries.

Example Indicators

- Tonnage increase;
- New commodity movement;
- Improved modal transfer efficiency;
- Reduced bottlenecks.



FY 2027 & FY 2028

Kentucky Public Riverport Construction and Maintenance (KPRCM)

Economic Development Impact — 20 Points

Evaluates the project's ability to support economic growth, jobs, industry, and private investment.

Considerations:

- Job creation/retention;
- Private investment leveraged;
- Industrial recruitment potential;
- Support for manufacturing, agriculture, energy, logistics, or export industries;
- Regional economic impact.

Example Indicators

- Capital investment;
- Jobs supported;
- New industrial users;
- Site readiness improvements.

FY 2027 & FY 2028

Kentucky Public Riverport Construction and Maintenance (KPRCM)

Project Readiness & Deliverability — 15 Points

Evaluates the likelihood the project can proceed efficiently and successfully.

Considerations:

- Engineering/design completed;
- Environmental/permitting status;
- Site control;
- Procurement readiness;
- Financial feasibility
- Realistic timeline

Example Scoring Guidance

- Fully designed and permitted projects score highest;
- Conceptual projects score lower.

FY 2027 & FY 2028

Kentucky Public Riverport Construction and Maintenance (KPRCM)

Safety, Resiliency & System Preservation — 15 Points

Evaluates the project's ability to improve safety, preserve infrastructure, and improve resiliency.

Considerations:

- Structural rehabilitation;
- Flood resiliency;
- Emergency response capabilities;
- Hazard mitigation;
- Worker/public safety improvements;
- Asset preservation.

Example Indicators

- Prevents operational failure;
- Improves resiliency during flooding;
- Corrects deficient infrastructure.



FY 2027 & FY 2028

Kentucky Public Riverport Construction and Maintenance (KPRCM)

Financial Leverage & Partnership — 10 Points

Evaluates whether the project leverages outside investment or partnerships.

Considerations:

- Federal grants;
 - Local contributions;
 - Private investment;
 - Public-private partnerships;
 - Multi-agency coordination.
-
- No local match is required by statute; however, leveraging outside investment may strengthen competitiveness.

FY 2027 & FY 2028

Kentucky Public Riverport Construction and Maintenance (KPRCM)

Strategic Importance to Kentucky — 10 Points

Evaluates the project's broader statewide transportation and economic significance.

Considerations:

- Geographic importance;
- Support for rural economies;
- Role in statewide freight strategy;
- Connection to statewide economic development goals;
- Support for critical supply chains.

FY 2027 & FY 2028

Kentucky Public Riverport Construction and Maintenance (KPRCM)

Developing Riverport Opportunity Bonus — 5 Points

Recognizes emerging or developing riverports with long-term strategic potential.

Purpose:

- Avoid excluding smaller or developing ports;
- Encourage long-term growth opportunities;
- Recognize strategic future investments.

Considerations:

- Emerging freight opportunity;
- Geographic gap coverage;
- Future growth potential;
- Catalytic infrastructure investment.

FY 2027 & FY 2028

Kentucky Public Riverport Construction and Maintenance (KPRCM)

KPRCM Timing: KYTC needs to make guidance document/application changes. Also seek Secretary's Office approval to move forward with program changes and schedule for KPRCM funds.

Tentative Schedule

August 3	Issue call for Letters of Intent
August 17	Letters of Intent Due
August 17	Issue Call for KPRCM applications (assuming one LOI call)
September 18	KPRCM applications due
September 28-October 2	WTAB Meeting

Discussion/Questions?



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@KYTC



@kytc120



@KYtransportation



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transportation.ky.gov

Thank you for your attendance and participation...

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