

August 22, 2025

Media Contact

Summers Miya, PIO | summers@portofbenton.com | 509-375-3060

Port Implements Revised Internal Processes to Address SAO Audit Finding

RICHLAND, Wash. – Port of Benton issued a news release on July 10, 2025, related to its recent 2023 unmodified audit by the State Auditor’s Office (SAO). That July press release can be found online at portofbenton.com/news.

According to the [U.S. Auditing Standards — AICPA](#), an authoritative source [identified by the SAO](#) of generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) an “unmodified” audit opinion is defined as: “The opinion expressed by the auditor when the auditor concludes that the financial statements are presented fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework.”

Over the past several months, the port has implemented new internal processes and documentation to address deficiencies identified by SAO, listed next, which the final Financial audit report reflected as a finding. Additionally, the 2023 audit was submitted late to the state. These issues should have been included in the July news release for transparency.

- Establish a process to periodically evaluate and review its capital assets to ensure accurate reporting, including whether assets are still in use and that the useful lives of the assets are reassessed periodically.
- Implement GASB Statement No. 96 Subscription-Based Information Technology Arrangement (SBITA) based on accounting standards.
- Review calculations the Port’s lease management software completed to ensure leases were calculated and reported correctly.
- Verify that amounts it reported in the financial statements, notes to the financial statements and required schedules were consistent with the underlying accounting records and adequately supported.

The port responded to each deficiency as follows:

- Assets – Agreed to periodically review its capital assets and periodically assess the estimated useful lives. The port recently removed 221 fully depreciated assets totaling \$2.8 million that are no longer in use from its asset listing. There was no impact on the port’s financial statements since these are fully depreciated.
- SBITA – Agreed to develop an SBITA policy, which will be presented to the Commission at its September meeting.
- Resources – An outside CPA firm has been hired to assist with GASB 87 lease calculations and the development of the financial statements.

Port staff reported these deficiencies and planned corrective actions to the Commission at recent public meetings. The remedies were accepted by the SAO during the audit and resulted in the unmodified audit for 2023.

From the SAO report, page 10: “We appreciate the Port’s commitment to resolve this finding and thank the Port for its cooperation and assistance during the audit. We will review the corrective action taken during our next regular audit.”

The port is committed to accountability, continuous improvement, fiscal stewardship and compliance with regulatory standards, as demonstrated by the steps immediately taken to address each issue.

Read the port’s 2023 [Accountability Audit report](#) and the [Financial and Single Audit report](#) on the Washington State Auditor’s Office website. They are also on the [Planning and Finance page](#) on the port’s website.

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