



STATE OF WASHINGTON
BOARD OF PILOTAGE COMMISSIONERS

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August 31, 2020

OPEN LETTER TO TANK VESSEL AND TUG ESCORT OPERATORS

The 2019 Washington State Legislature passed [Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1578](#), *Reducing threats to southern resident killer whales by improving the safety of oil transportation*. This open letter outlines what Washington State laws require regarding tug escorts in Rosario Strait and connected waterways east effective September 1, 2020.

WASHINGTON LAWS REGARDING TUG ESCORTS

The Revised Code of Washington (RCW) [88.16.190](#) requires that, effective September 1, 2020, the following may operate in [Rosario Strait and connected waterways east](#) only if [under the escort of a tug or tugs](#) that have an aggregate shaft horsepower equivalent to at least 5% of the deadweight tons of a 40,000 deadweight ton [oil](#) tanker:

- A. Oil tankers of between 5,000 and 40,000 deadweight tons; and
- B. Articulated tug barges (ATBs) and waterborne vessels or barges that are:
 - i. Designed to transport oil in bulk internal to the hull; and
 - ii. Greater than 5,000 deadweight tons.

Note: The tug escort requirements outlined above do not apply to a towed general cargo deck barge or [a vessel providing bunkering or refueling services](#).

The Board of Pilotage Commissioner (BPC) has developed, through the BPC's Oil Transportation Safety Committee (OTSC), and adopted an [Interpretive Statement](#) to add clarity to the new laws. The Interpretive Statement can be found on our website at <https://pilotage.wa.gov/oil-transportation-safety.html>.

MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT

If the BPC becomes aware of any potential violations, we will contact the operators and, if needed, investigate any non-compliance. In addition, the BPC can take legal action pursuant to [88.16.150 RCW](#).

If you have any questions concerning this letter, please contact Jaimie Bever, BPC Executive Director, at (206) 515-3887 or BeverJ@wsdot.wa.gov.

Sheri J. Tonn, Chair
Board of Pilotage Commissioners