



STATE OF WASHINGTON
BOARD OF PILOTAGE COMMISSIONERS

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July 8, 2022

OPEN LETTER TO SHIPPING COMPANIES AND AGENTS

Re: Cruise Season Potential Temporary Vessel Delays Due to Pilot Shortage

Dear Shippers and Agents,

As you know, 2022 summer cruise ship traffic departing from Seattle is at an all-time high. At the same time, Puget Sound Pilots (PSP) is experiencing an unprecedented shortage of pilots due to retirements and medical issues, including COVID-19. In addition, while the training program is at maximum capacity, trainees are at various levels of the program and cannot be licensed at the speed necessary to fill the immediate need. We license new pilots as soon as they successfully complete the training program, and PSP puts them to work as soon as they are licensed. We hope to license two more trainees by the end of the summer. However, we may also have off-setting retirements.

The Board of Pilotage Commissioners (BPC or Board) continues to look at PSP operations and efficiency improvement measures both through the Pilot Safety Committee (PSC) and Board level. However, we anticipate there will continue to be temporary delays through the 2022 Cruise Season (May-October) when target assignment levels are exceeded. PSP reports the number and duration of delays to the Board and actions they are taking to reduce the delays. The Board continues to seek reasons for each delay in order to identify solutions that better match rested pilots to pilot orders.

We understand industry has adjusted operations due to COVID and supply chain issues. It is in this spirit that we request your help in reducing the magnitude and duration of pilot delays. We urge you to review and ensure the highest degree of accuracy when placing a pilot order and avoid order time changes as much as possible. Each time change has a corresponding cascading effect on assignments. What is particularly important is the reduction in the number of pilot orders placed for early departure, rather than at the most likely time of departure or arrival.

Feel free to contact us if you have concerns. Thank you for your understanding.

Sheri J. Tonn, Chair
Board of Pilotage Commissioners

cc: Mike Moore, PMSA
Ivan Carlson, PSP