

To: UTC Commissioners
From: Capt. Ryan Leo
Re: Puget Sound Pilotage Tariff

3/24/2023

Dear Commissioners:

I am a Grays Harbor Bar Pilot and I am writing regarding the Puget Sound Pilot tariff. Having taken the Washington State Pilotage Exam in April 2021 with the aspirations of becoming a Puget Sound Pilot, I feel it is important that the Commissioners understand why I chose to pursue my pilotage career elsewhere.

Although I passed the exam and was excited to train in the Puget Sound, I nonetheless decided to pursue my pilotage career in Grays Harbor. While not my first choice, I eventually chose to become a Grays Harbor pilot because the compensation and benefits were better, the training program was shorter, and there are work/life benefits at Grays Harbor for licensed pilots.

As a containership captain, I had transited the Puget Sound many times, and had long aspired to pilot on those waters. However, after serious consideration I came to the conclusion that the financial impacts, both long and short term, of leaving my job as a containership captain and pursuing pilotage in the Puget Sound were too great.

I believe that Puget Sound Pilots will continue to have difficulty attracting professional mariners and retaining pilotage talent as long as the compensation and benefits for the district are below the national average, particularly given the high cost of living in the Puget Sound area.

Best Regards,



Capt. Ryan Leo, AFNI
Master Mariner Unlimited Tonnage
Federal First Class Pilot
Licensed Washington State Pilot
Grays Harbor Bar Pilot
RLeo@portgrays.org
(516)712-5468