

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION STAFF
RESPONSE TO BENCH REQUEST

DATE PREPARED: September 4, 2020
DOCKET: TP-190976
REQUESTER: Bench

WITNESS: Scott Sevall
RESPONDER: Scott Sevall
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BENCH REQUEST NO. 4:

Given the testimony on the record about significant changes in vessel movements in the Puget Sound pilotage district beginning in the first quarter of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, please provide actual vessel movements for the first and second quarter of 2020, and updated three-year projections for vessel movements in the Puget Sound pilotage district (2021, 2022, 2023). Please provide a narrative explanation describing the basis for each update.

RESPONSE:

Staff received draft vessel information from Washington Department of Ecology, Spills Program for the first two quarters of 2020. Staff has calculated an updated assignment projection of 6,421 pilot assignments for 2021. The calculation is provided in Attachment A to this response.¹

Staff's original calculation relied on historical information as a proxy to provide an estimate for a single year going forward. Staff relies on this same method to provide the updated calculation. Given that the method relies on historical information for its projection, Staff cannot provide a projection for 2022 or 2023, as the data for the prior years (2021 and 2022 respectively) does not yet exist.

Based on its review of the record, Staff also understands that no party provided more than a single year projection regarding vessel traffic and assignments. Furthermore, Staff agrees with PSP that "the size and speed of the recovery [from COVID-19] could take multiple possible paths and that changes to those projections [for 2020] are likely. Thus, rather than known and measurable changes, any attempted adjustments to the projections made in November 2019 would be nothing more than speculation about what will occur."²

Staff would like to emphasize that the data it obtained from the Department of Ecology is draft data and may be subject to further revision or explanation when Ecology publishes its Vessel Entry and Transit Report for all of 2020. If the Commission has any questions as to how the updated vessel projection may impact Staff's proposed rates, Staff would be willing to provide further clarification in response to additional bench requests.

¹ The graphs contained in Attachment A were included as part of the data received from Department of Ecology. The graphs are only intended as a visual representation of the data and do not contain any independent analysis from Staff.

² Khawaja, Exh. SK-3T at 14:16-20.