

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

In the Matter of a Penalty Assessment)	DOCKET TS-150963
Against)	
)	ORDER 01
HAT ISLAND COMMUNITY)	
ASSOCIATION)	ORDER GRANTING
)	MITIGATION TO \$250
in the amount of \$1,000)	
.....)	

BACKGROUND

- 1 Washington law requires commercial ferry companies to file annual reports and pay regulatory fees by May 1 of each year. WAC 480-51-100. On February 27, 2015, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) mailed annual report and regulatory fee packets to all regulated commercial ferry companies. The forms included a reminder that companies must file their annual reports and pay their regulatory fees by May 1, 2015, or face penalties of \$100 for each violation of Commission rules. In the case of continuing violations, each day’s continuance is a separate violation. RCW 80.04.405.
- 2 Hat Island Community Association (Hat Island or Company) did not file its annual report on May 1, 2015, and had not made that filing by May 15. On May 21, the Commission assessed a penalty of \$1,000 against Hat Island, calculated as \$100 per business day from May 1 to May 15.
- 3 On June 1, 2015, Hat Island responded to the Commission’s penalty assessment, admitting the violations and requesting mitigation of the penalty based on the written information provided. The Company explained that it hired a new bookkeeper on March 1, 2015, who was in the process of transitioning the books to new accounting software, and was also out of the office from April 15 to May 15. The Company requests the penalty be waived due to the hardship created by staff turnover and the resulting time constraints.
- 4 On June 9, 2015, Hat Island filed its 2014 annual report and paid its regulatory and late payment fees.
- 5 On June 10, 2015, Commission Staff (Staff) filed a response recommending the Commission mitigate the penalty to \$25 per day, or \$250. Staff noted that the Company has no prior violations of WAC 480-51-100.

DISCUSSION

- 6 WAC 480-51-100 requires regulated commercial ferry companies to file annual reports and pay regulatory fees by May 1 of each year. Companies are responsible for complying with their legal obligations, and the Company should have ensured its annual report was timely filed, regardless of employee turnover and availability.
- 7 The Commission nevertheless agrees with Staff's recommendation. The Commission may consider a number of factors when entertaining a request for mitigation, including a company's history of compliance, whether the violation was promptly corrected, and the likelihood the violation will recur.¹ This is Hat Island's first violation of WAC 480-51-100, and the Company has since filed its annual report and paid its regulatory and late fees. In addition, the Company has been regulated since 2008; given its history of compliance, the violation is not likely to recur. In light of these factors, the Commission will exercise its discretion to reduce the penalty to \$250.

ORDER

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 8 (1) Hat Island Community Association's request for mitigation of the \$1,000 penalty is GRANTED, in part, and the penalty is reduced to \$250.
- 9 (2) The penalty is due and payable no later than June 25, 2015.
- 10 The Secretary has been delegated authority to enter this order on behalf of the Commissioners under WAC 480-07-904(1)(h).

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective June 15, 2015.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

STEVEN V. KING
Executive Director and Secretary

¹ Docket A-120061, Enforcement Policy for the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (January 7, 2013).

NOTICE TO PARTIES: This is an order delegated to the Executive Secretary for decision. As authorized in WAC 480-07-904(3), you must file any request for Commission review of this order no later than 14 days after the date the decision is posted on the Commission's website.