

Exh. CJ-01T

Witness: Captain Christian Julien

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

**WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION,
Complainant,**

v.

**PUGET SOUND PILOTS,
Respondent.**

Docket TP-220513

**REBUTTAL TESTIMONY OF
CAPTAIN CHRISTIAN JULIEN
ON BEHALF OF PUGET SOUND PILOTS**

MARCH 3, 2023

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I. IDENTIFICATION OF WITNESS

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Q: Please state your name, position and business address.

A: My name is Captain Christian Julien. I have been licensed as a Columbia River Bar Pilot since February 11, 2020. The business address of the Columbia River Bar Pilots is 100 16th St., Astoria, OR 97103.

Q: Please describe your educational background and work history.

A: After being born and raised in the Los Angeles area, I took a job as an ordinary seaman on an oceangoing vessel during the summer after graduation from high school. I had applied to and been accepted at California Maritime Academy, but had initially decided not to go to college and instead intended to continue pursuit of a seagoing career without higher education. However, when the ship’s Captain Jim Hill learned that I had been accepted at CMA, he told me in no uncertain terms that I should not pass up that opportunity and that I would be departing the ship at her next port of call to return to California to enter CMA. That was some of the best advice I have ever received. I graduated from the California Maritime Academy in 2000 knowing that the pinnacle of a deck officer's career is to become a pilot. Between 2000 and into 2019, I worked primarily for Liberty Maritime, a US company operating multiple US flag bulk carriers and car carriers. I worked first as Third Mate and then progressed to Second Mate and then to Chief Mate aboard bulk carriers. I earned my Unlimited Masters license in 2011 and was promoted to Captain that same year at age 32. I then spent six years as Captain aboard Liberty Maritime's car carriers. In September 2019, I began training to become a Columbia River Bar Pilot and I received my state license from the Oregon Board of Maritime Pilots on February 11, 2020.

II. PURPOSE OF TESTIMONY

1 **Q: What is the purpose of your testimony?**

2 A: My testimony addresses what I consider to be the most important components of a pilot
3 group or pilot commission's efforts to diversify a pilot group. These include nationally
4 competitive pay and benefits, cost-of-living considerations and the stability of the regulatory
5 system supporting the pilotage ground.
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7
8 **Q: During your work for Liberty Maritime, in positions from Third Mate to Captain,
9 what was your typical work cycle?**

10 A: Like most of the maritime industry employment aboard vessels, my seagoing career
11 involved equal amounts of time on and time off. My average on watch/off watch work cycles
12 were 110 days each.
13

14
15 **Q: Are you a member of any underrepresented ethnic group?**

16 A: Yes. My parents were both raised in Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean. My ancestry
17 is predominately African and East Indian. I knew from early on in my seagoing career that deck
18 officers were almost entirely white males, but I was privileged to have the opportunity to attend
19 CMA with another colleague of African descent who is now a member of the Sabine Pilots
20 providing pilotage services to vessels calling ports and waterways in Southeast Texas. I also had
21 the privilege of working with two female captains before becoming the Liberty Maritime's first
22 captain of color.
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1 **Q: After being promoted to Captain in 2011, did you begin to explore the opportunity**
2 **to become a marine pilot?**

3 A: Yes. My primary interests in terms of potential pilot positions were on the West Coast,
4 specifically LA Harbor, Puget Sound and the Columbia River Bar.

5
6 **Q: What did you do to explore the potential opportunities to become a pilot in those**
7 **locations?**

8 A: Over a period of years following my promotion to Captain, I visited the pilot groups in
9 each of those areas and did my best to learn as much as possible about each group, the nature of
10 their work, the compensation and benefits and the regulatory environment in which each group
11 operated.
12

13
14 **Q: Did you eventually apply to become a trainee and take the necessary examinations**
15 **for any of those pilotage grounds?**

16 A: Yes. I eventually applied for trainee positions both in Puget Sound and the Columbia
17 River Bar.
18

19
20 **Q: Please describe what happened in connection with each of those application**
21 **processes.**

22 A: I first applied to take the exam in Puget Sound. I had a natural preference for that location
23 because my home was in the Seattle/Tacoma area. I first applied to take the Puget Sound/Grays
24 Harbor test in 2016. At the time, my research indicated that most successful applicants needed
25 two exam cycles to pass and make the trainee list. I knew that the recommended approach to the
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1 exam was to invest in a prep course and the purchase of simulator training time at the Pacific
2 Maritime Institute in Seattle. At the time, my financial situation was such that I needed to keep
3 working for Liberty Maritime and my preparation time would have to occur during my off-watch
4 time at sea without a prep course or any simulator time. As things turned out, my ship was
5 delayed reaching the last port of call in Korea and I ended up flying home on a red-eye to Seattle,
6 arriving just the day before the examination. I performed well on much of the test, but did not
7 make the pass list. At the time, I knew that failing was a distinct possibility considering my lack
8 of preparation time, but I also knew from talking with other applicants that just taking the exam
9 would be valuable because it often took a second test cycle to pass and make the trainee list.
10 Knowing that the next exam for Puget Sound would not occur for two to three years, I took the
11 examination and simulation tests for the Columbia River Bar in 2017, passed those tests, stood
12 for the interview and was ultimately ranked third on the trainee applicant list. With that ranking
13 on the Columbia River Bar trainee list, it was projected to be a year or two before an opening
14 would occur and I would be invited to begin my training.
15
16

17 **Q: After being ranked No. 3 on the pilot trainee list for the Columbia River Bar, did**
18 **you consider taking the Puget Sound exam when it became known that it would occur in**
19 **2018?**
20

21 **A:** I considered it, but a number of considerations caused me not to apply to take the Puget
22 Sound test in 2018. First, I learned that one of my CMA classmates, who was ranked No. 2 on
23 the Columbia River Bar trainee list, accepted a pilot position in New Zealand and was likely to
24 pass on the opportunity to train to become a Columbia River Bar Pilot when an opening
25 occurred, which effectively moved me into the No. 2 position. There were also multiple other
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1 factors that caused me to prefer the opportunity to become a Columbia River Bar Pilot rather
2 than a Puget Sound Pilot. These included differences in compensation and benefits between the
3 two grounds, cost-of-living considerations and the highly acrimonious relationship between the
4 Puget Sound Pilots and the trade association representing the vessels receiving pilotage services
5 in Puget Sound, the Pacific Merchant Shipping Association.

6
7 **Q: Please explain how these factors influenced your decision not to test for a Puget**
8 **Sound pilot trainee position in 2018.**

9 A: Two of the most important considerations in my decision not to test again in Puget Sound
10 were compensation and benefits and cost of living. As of 2017, the net income and benefits of
11 the Columbia River Bar Pilots were below the net income of PSP pilots, but not by a large sum.
12 From my perspective, with years of living in the Seattle/Tacoma area, I knew that the difference
13 in compensation and benefits was more than made up by the higher cost-of-living in the
14 Seattle/Tacoma area compared to Oregon. I was also impressed with the fact that the tariff
15 funding the Columbia River Bar pilotage ground was adjusted quarterly to actual traffic,
16 effectively providing a guaranty that every pilot within the Columbia River Bar Pilots would
17 earn the level of net income and benefits approved by the Oregon Board of Maritime Pilots. It
18 was also significant that the net income and benefits component of the tariff for the Columbia
19 River Bar pilotage ground is adjusted annually for inflation based upon the Consumer Price
20 Index. I knew that there was no COLA adjustment made annually to the tariff funding the Puget
21 Sound Pilotage District.

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23
24 Another consideration that influenced my decision related to lifestyle, specifically the
25 travel time component of a pilot's work in Astoria, Oregon compared to Puget Sound. As a
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1 Columbia River Bar Pilot, it's a five minute drive for me from the home we purchased in Astoria
2 to the Bar Pilots' office at the foot of 16th St. on the Columbia River in downtown Astoria. I am
3 then a 10 to 15-minute cab ride away from our office to either the Astoria Airport where I will
4 board our helicopter to be flown 10 to 12 miles offshore and then hoisted via wire down to the
5 deck of an incoming vessel or to our pilot boathouse facility in the neighboring town of
6 Warrenton to board one of our two pilot boats for the transit offshore to meet an incoming vessel.
7 After completing an inbound assignment, where the Bar Pilot hands off the ship to a Columbia
8 River Pilot (after completing the pilot to pilot information exchange) in the Columbia River just
9 off the downtown Astoria waterfront, I then disembark from that ship via pilot ladder to a launch
10 that returns me directly to the dock at our office. In other words, almost all of my pilotage
11 assignments begin or end with me at our office in downtown Astoria. From a travel time
12 perspective, this is a dramatically different situation than that of every Puget Sound Pilot. With
13 one of the largest pilotage districts in the country, PSP pilots often have multi-hour travel times
14 to and from assignments that begin or end within a far-flung pilotage district from Port Angeles
15 in the north to Olympia in the south.
16

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18 The third factor that played a significant role in my decision not to seek licensure as a
19 pilot in Puget Sound was what I perceived as a very acrimonious relationship between the PMSA
20 and the Puget Sound Pilots. As part of my due diligence in evaluating the potential pilot position
21 opportunities in Puget Sound and the Columbia River Bar, I attended multiple meetings of the
22 Washington Board of Pilotage Commissioners and the Oregon Board of Maritime Pilots. I was
23 struck by the contentious character of some of the BPC meetings I attended over the years where
24 I observed Captain Mike Moore of the PMSA and PSP's Executive Director Walt Tabler engage
25 in quite vigorous arguments during those meetings. That was not the case in the meetings of the
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1 Oregon Board of Maritime Pilots where I also learned that it had been typical over the prior
2 decade for Oregon pilot groups to reach rate case settlements with Oregon ports and the trade
3 association representing vessel owners, the Columbia River Steamship Operators Association.
4 The level of pilotage rate stability on the Columbia River Bar pilotage ground was therefore a
5 significant plus compared to Puget Sound.

6
7 **Q: Based your experience, what is your opinion regarding the importance of**
8 **competitive pay and benefits to a pilot group or pilot commission's efforts to diversify a**
9 **largely white male pilot corps?**

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11 A: Throughout my career, I have always known that deck officer jobs aboard blue water
12 oceangoing vessels or brown water towboats or other inland vessels pay a significant premium in
13 compensation and benefits compared to land-based jobs, a premium that reflects the fact that
14 service aboard a vessel for an extended on watch period keeps that worker away from family and
15 friends. And, as one progresses through a deck officer career, the pay increasingly goes up to
16 reflect the highly specialized character of our work. In my opinion, this is to be expected just as
17 one expects a highly specialized doctor or lawyer to earn a very good living.

18
19 When it comes to attracting pilot trainee candidates who are women or from
20 underrepresented communities, I believe there is no question that competitive pay and benefits is
21 a major factor. As a member of an underrepresented community myself, I recognized that there
22 would be more competition between pilot groups and pilot commissions for people like me,
23 especially in those jurisdictions that place a high value on diversification of highly paid largely
24 white male dominated work forces. While it is important that a pilot group interested in member
25 diversification be inclusive and have a culture that strongly supports diversity, equity and
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1 inclusion, the reality is that competitive pay and benefits and a stable tariff funding system will
2 be very high on the list of factors that all diverse pilot trainee candidates consider in deciding
3 where to apply.
4

5 **Q: Given what you've learned about the differences in pay and benefits between**
6 **different West Coast pilotage grounds in the three years that you have been a Columbia**
7 **River Bar Pilot, what level of net income do you believe that the Puget Sound Pilots need to**
8 **earn in order to be attractive compared to other grounds on the West Coast and**
9 **throughout the United States?**

10
11 A: In my opinion, taking into account the factors I discussed above including regional cost-
12 of-living considerations, I believe that Puget Sound Pilots need to be paid significantly above the
13 low \$500,000 level that Oregon's major pilot groups, the Columbia River Bar Pilots and
14 Columbia River Pilots, are projected to earn in 2023.
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16 **III. CONCLUSION.**
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18 **Q: Does this conclude your testimony?**

19 A: Yes.
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