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BEFORE THE WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

In re Application of
MEI NORTHWEST LLC
For a Certificate of Public Convenience and
Necessity to Operate Vessels in Furnishing
Passenger Ferry Service

Docket TS-160479

**TESTIMONY OF
DEBI COLLINS
BLUE WATER SHIPPING COMPANY**

November 1, 2016

1 **I. INTRODUCTION**

2 **Q: Please state your name and business address.**

3 A: My name is Debi Collins, Blue Water Shipping Company, 33530 1st Way S., Suite 102,
4 Federal Way, Washington 98003.

5 **Q: By whom are you employed and in what capacity?**

6 A: I am a ship’s agent with Blue Water Shipping Company’s Seattle area office with
7 regional headquarters in Tualatin, Oregon and national headquarters in New Orleans,
8 Louisiana.

9 **Q: Would you please describe your business experience.**

10 A: I have been an agent in the marine industry for the last approximate 36 years. Initially,
11 in 1980 with the Cascade Company for whom I worked in operations from 1980 to
12 2004 and since 2004 I have been with Blue Water Shipping Company where I am also
13 in operations.

14 **Q: Please describe what Blue Water Shipping Company does.**

15 A: We are shipping agents. We handle bulk freighters that load corn and soy beans in the
16 Ports of Seattle and Tacoma. Blue Water is a charters’ agent who coordinates with the
17 vessel owner, vessel charter, the vessel, and various service providers and arranges to
18 provide all requirements for a vessel while she is in Port, including scheduling Pilots,
19 Tugs, Launches, Inspections and surveys, delivery of spare parts and provisions, crew
20 requirements, etc. off and on ocean-going vessels.

21 **Q: For whom does Blue Water specifically work?**

22 A: We represent charters for loading grain at elevators in Seattle and Tacoma.

23 **II. SCOPE OF TESTIMONY**

24 **Q: What is the purpose of your testimony today?**

1 A: The purpose of my testimony today is to attest to the exemplary service Arrow Launch
2 Service, Inc. has provided Blue Water Shipping since my tenure began in 2004.

3 **Q: Does Blue Water have a need for authorization of any additional launch service?**

4 A: No. Arrow Launch Service has provided excellent and responsive service to Blue
5 Water and we have never had a problem with that service. Arrow Launch Service is
6 highly accommodating and helpful, particularly in follow up and “closing the loop” on
7 orders, working with us to facilitate service to Blue Water’s customers and expedite
8 transportation to the vessels at anchorage.

9 **Q: In that capacity have you interacted with Arrow Launch Service?**

10 A: Yes, continuously throughout my 12 years at Blue Water Shipping and in my previous
11 tenure at Cascade.

12 **Q: What services does Arrow Launch Service provide to Blue Water vessels?**

13 A: Arrow provides launch service (water transportation) for passengers and freight in
14 Seattle, Tacoma, also in Port Angeles where our vessels stop for bunkers or repairs.

15 **Q: Have you had any experience with other launch companies?**

16 A: Yes, in earlier years with Seattle Harbor Tours, who utilized a vessel called the
17 “Beaver” for regulated launch service in the Port of Seattle and which was not nearly as
18 convenient as the vessels Arrow Launch uses for us.

19 **Q: What percentage of your business do you typically have in the Seattle and Tacoma
20 ports respectively?**

21 A: Well it generally is pretty even, but I would project that as grain shipments go we do
22 about 55% of our work in the Port of Seattle and 45% in the Port of Tacoma. The grain
23 business is somewhat seasonal in that during a few months out of the year there can be
24 no, or minimal activity, yet at peak season, say in the fall harvest, there can be three or
25 four ships at anchor waiting for their turn at berth at the grain elevator.

1 **Q: Since 2004 could you characterize the service history of Arrow Launch Service**
2 **with Blue Water?**

3 A: We have never once had Arrow deny service or not be available on our or our
4 customers' timelines. Arrow has always been dependable and has never declined or
5 failed to provide service to us on our schedule.

6 **Q: Could you please describe the frequency of service for which you require**
7 **regulated launch service?**

8 A: That will depend on the number of ships in the port at any given time. We average
9 between 0 and 15 ships per month. In September 2016, for instance, we had 12 ships at
10 anchor in the Ports of Seattle and Tacoma. We use the launch about one or two times
11 for each ship.

12 **Q: Could you please describe a typical interaction with Arrow Launch Service?**

13 A: Yes. Normally we would call Arrow Launch's dispatch office to place an order,
14 providing Arrow information about the ship arrival time, scheduling a boarding party
15 that includes US Customs, National Cargo Bureau, State Grain, repair technicians, etc.
16 We also ask Arrow, when required, to deliver US Custom I-95 forms (US Customs
17 Shore Passes to be completed by each crewmember of the ship), (Arrow supplying
18 these is a huge help), and any other specifics that may be required by the ship including
19 passengers and provisions to be delivered by a launch vessel.

20 **Q: How would you characterize Arrow Launch Service's responsiveness with respect**
21 **to those kind of interactions?**

22 A: It's simply excellent, highly responsive, we've never had a problem and Arrow is very
23 accommodating.

24 **Q: Could you describe in a little more detail what you mean by "very**
25 **accommodating?"**

1 A: Arrow Launch Service goes out of its way to provide us comprehensive service
2 including following up once an initial order is placed verifying the specifics of an order.
3 For example, Arrow will frequently contact Blue Water when a ship is early or late to
4 the Port Angeles Pilots Station to alert us because these changes may completely alter
5 the timing of requirements in Seattle or Tacoma. Arrow Launch Service and its
6 personnel work closely with us to coordinate service to Blue Water's customers to and
7 from vessels at anchor.

8 **Q: Again, have you ever had on any single occasion difficulty in getting a launch
9 vessel to your company on request?**

10 A: No. Moreover, we have emergent needs often on short notice such as when a ship
11 drags an anchor whether it is in the middle of the night or on a weekend; Arrow has
12 always been incredibly responsive without problem or incident as the shipping industry
13 relies on "24/7" availability.

14 **Q: Have you ever heard of or been contacted by a company called MEI or MEI
15 Northwest, LLC?**

16 A: No. We haven't been contacted by MEI to my knowledge and I have not heard of them
17 prior to being notified by Arrow Launch Service of their application.

18 **Q: What would your reaction be to any possible dilution of Arrow's customer or
19 revenue base?**

20 A: Well, in my experience of over two decades of using Arrow Launch Service based on
21 their service record, I would be concerned. Particularly if it impacted Arrow's viability.
22 Also, I would be concerned that a reduction in revenues would potentially increase
23 costs. In short, any reduction in the resources or service availability of Arrow is a
24 concern for us.

25 **Q: Are there any other comments you have about Arrow Launch Service?**

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A: Yes, one in particular. Arrow Launch has a “protocol of service” and has developed a very symbiotic relationship with Blue Water in the northwest. In other words, they have implemented repeat and routine practices in servicing our vessels with communication, safety of operations, follow up on service detail, constant communication and requests for feedback on the caliber and quality of service that demonstrate the unspoken hallmark of Arrow Launch’s reliability to Blue Water. We frankly couldn’t do our jobs as well for our customers without the service “partnership” we have with Arrow and we wish to commend Arrow and its staff for consistent, excellent level of service to Blue Water.

Q: Does this conclude your testimony in this proceeding?

A: Yes it does.

2 CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

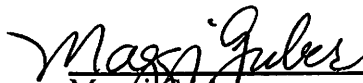
3 I certify that on November 1, 2016, I caused to be served the original of the foregoing
4 document to the following address via FedEx to:

5 Steven V. King, Executive Director and Secretary
6 Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
7 Attn: Records Center
8 PO Box 47250
9 1300 S. Evergreen Park Dr. SW
10 Olympia, WA 98504-7250

11 I further certify that I have also provided to the Washington Utilities and Transportation
12 Commission's Secretary an official electronic file containing the foregoing document via the
13 WUTC web portal; and served a copy via email to the following parties:

<p>12 <i>For Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission Staff:</i> 13 Julian Beattie 14 Office of the Attorney General 15 Utilities and Transportation Division 16 1400 S. Evergreen Park Drive SW 17 P.O. Box 40128 18 Olympia, WA 98504-0128 19 Phone: (360) 664-1225 20 Email: jbeattie@utc.wa.gov</p>	<p><i>For MEI Northwest, LLC:</i> Mr. Dan Bentson Bullivant, Houser, Bailey, PC 1700 Seventh Ave, Suite 1810 Seattle, WA 98101 Email: dan.bentson@bullivant.com</p>
<p>17 <i>For Pacific Cruises Northwest, LLC:</i> 18 Captain Drew M. Schmidt 19 President 20 Pacific Cruises Northwest, Inc. 355 Harris Avenue, Suite 104 Bellingham, WA 98225 Phone: (360) 738-8099 Email: drew@whales.com</p>	<p><i>Administrative Law Judge</i> Judge Marguerite E. Friedlander Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission Email: mfriedla@utc.wa.gov</p>

21 Signed at Seattle, Washington this 1st day of November 2016.

22
23 
24 Maggi Gruber
25 Legal Assistant
Williams Kastner & Gibbs PLLC
mgruber@williamskastner.com