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**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION,
Complainant,

Docket No. TP-190976

v.

PUGET SOUND PILOTS,
Respondent.

**REBUTTAL TESTIMONY OF
CAPTAIN JEREMY NIELSEN,
President, Columbia River Pilots
ON BEHALF OF PUGET SOUND PILOTS**

July 13, 2020

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1 **I. IDENTIFICATION OF WITNESS**

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

3 A: My name is Jeremy Nielsen and my business address is 13225 N. Lombard, Portland,
4 Oregon 97203.

5 **Q: Will you please state your title and affiliation with Columbia River Pilots?**

6 A: I am the President of Columbia River Pilots (“COLRIP”) and a pilot licensed by the State
7 of Oregon.

8 **II. PURPOSE IN SUBMITTING REBUTTAL TESTIMONY**

9 **Q: For what purpose is your testimony offered?**

10 A: I am offering rebuttal testimony regarding the comparability of pilotage districts in order
11 to assist the Commission in understanding how information involving compensation for
12 Columbia River Pilots, workload distribution and Callbacks could potentially assist it in
13 establishing rates for Puget Sound Pilots.

14 **III. REBUTTAL TESTIMONY**

15 **Q: How long have you been licensed to pilot on the Columbia River?**

16 A: I obtained my license from the Board of Maritime Pilots on March 19, 2016.

17 **Q: In that time, have you become familiar with the Puget Sound pilotage district?**

18 A: Yes, I have.

19 **Q: Are you also familiar with the pilotage districts for the Columbia River Pilots and
20 the Columbia River Bar Pilots?**

21 A: Yes.

22 **Q: Have you had an opportunity to review pages 14 – 15 of Exhibit SS-1T, the pre-filed
23 testimony of Scott Sevall?**

24 A: Yes, I have.
25

1 **Q: There, Mr. Sevall asserts that among other pilotage districts, the Columbia River**
2 **and Columbia River Bar are not comparable “on their face” to the Puget Sound**
3 **Pilotage District. Do you agree with Mr. Sevall that the Columbia River and**
4 **Columbia River Bar are dissimilar from the Puget Sound?**

5 A: No. Every pilotage district has its own unique properties, but I believe there are many
6 similarities between the Columbia River and the Puget Sound that should have been
7 considered.

8 **Q: In what ways do you believe pilotage on the Columbia River is similar to pilotage on**
9 **the Puget Sound?**

10 A: Well for one, the profession itself is the same. Although there are certainly differences in
11 the specific training required to become an expert in navigating local waterways of one
12 pilotage district versus another, the background experience and skillsets required of pilots
13 in both pilotage districts have a great deal of overlap. There is also a lot of overlap in the
14 types of ships that call on the Columbia River, and overlap in the way pilotage service is
15 provided. The Columbia River Pilots are a pilot association much like the Puget Sound
16 Pilots.

17 **Q: In what ways do you believe reliance upon a pilot association makes the two districts**
18 **similar?**

19 A: To understand the similarities, it helps to understand the alternative. Port pilotage, like in
20 Los Angeles, relies upon pilots who are employees. Those pilots have a contract that
21 specifies their work shifts and compensation. The pilots there have no risk of a downturn
22 in vessel traffic because of their contract; if the ships do not arrive the port still pays the
23 pilots. When pilotage is operated through a pilot association, pilots take the risk of a
24 downturn like we are all currently facing. Like Puget Sound Pilots, COLRIP pilots are
25

1 all members of the association and our compensation is based on a distribution of net
2 income.

3 **Q: Does COLRIP also rely on a watch schedule to determine when pilots work?**

4 A: Yes. We work on a schedule of two-weeks on and two-weeks off. And pilots in the
5 Columbia River, like the Puget Sound Pilots, are required to observe fatigue guidelines
6 that limit time on task.

7 **Q: Considering your watch schedule, is it a common occurrence that off-duty pilots are**
8 **asked to accept an additional assignment to help out when there is a surge of vessel**
9 **traffic?**

10 A: No. It is actually a rare occurrence that pilots are asked to come back to do extra work in
11 their time off. We have about 40 of those jobs a year.

12 **Q: Are pilots compensated for the extra work performed if they agree to perform a**
13 **callback assignment?**

14 A: Yes. COLRIP gives the pilot a choice of either receiving additional pay or what we call a
15 “blood bank day,” which is an additional day off that can be used later. Most pilots here
16 opt for blood bank days.

17 **Q: Are there pilots with a significant number of blood bank days?**

18 A: No. Because we rarely need to ask pilots to perform extra work, the most any one pilot
19 has banked is about 25 days.

20 **Q: Do pilots there also receive sick leave?**

21 A: Yes. We receive 10 emergency leave days a year.

22 **Q: In order to account for the blood bank days and sick leave, does COLRIP rely on**
23 **accrual based accounting?**

24 A: No. We are cash based.
25

1 **Q: In order to better understand the similarities and differences between the Columbia**
2 **River and the Puget Sound, how many assignments per year is a Columbia River**
3 **pilot expected to work?**

4 A: The Board of Maritime Pilots sets rates and authorizes the number of funded pilots based
5 upon an assignment level of 106 assignments per pilot.

6 **Q: Do those assignments include shifts?**

7 A: Yes, they include shifts, or what we call “harbor moves”; longer transits of the river
8 between Astoria and the upriver ports; and interport moves.

9 **Q: How long does it take to perform the average assignment for a COLRIP pilot?**

10 A: Our total time on task, including time for preparation, travel and checking in with
11 dispatch after the assignment is completed averaged 7 hours and 33 minutes in 2018 and
12 7 hours and 38 minutes in 2019.

13 **Q: How many assignments did COLRIP complete in 2018 and 2019?**

14 A: In 2018 we completed 4,523 assignments, excluding car rides and drug tests for a total of
15 815 hours on task per pilot. In 2019 we had 4103 assignments, also excluding car rides
16 and drug tests, for a total of 765 hours on task per pilot.

17 **Q: And how many pilots does COLRIP have?**

18 A: We currently have 41 unlimited pilots and five trainee pilots in various stages of training.
19 Officially, in 2018 we had 45.69 FTE, and in 2019 we had 45.5 FTE.

20 **Q: In your knowledge, does the State of Oregon consider the income of Puget Sound**
21 **pilots when establishing tariff rates for Columbia River Pilots?**

22 A: Yes. It is my understanding that in making its decision on a proposed tariff adjustment,
23 the Board of Maritime Pilots is required to consider compensation for comparable pilot
24
25

1 districts and the income of pilots in the Puget Sound is expressly considered in that
2 evaluation.

3 **Q: Does this conclude your testimony?**

4 **A:** Yes it does.
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