Docket No. TP-190976 - Vol. I

Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission v. Puget Sound Pilots

December 12, 2019



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1	BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
2	UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
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4	WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND) DOCKET TP-190976 TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION,)
5	Complainant,)
6)
7 8	vs.) PUGET SOUND PILOTS)
9	Řespondent.)
10	
11	PREHEARING CONFERENCE, VOLUME I
12	Pages 1-27
13 14	CHAIRMAN DANNER, COMMISSIONER RENDAHL, COMMISSIONER BALASBAS, & JUDGE PEARSON
15	December 12, 2019
16 17	9:30 a.m.
18	Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
19	621 Woodland Square Loop Southeast Lacey, Washington 98503
20	REPORTED BY: TAYLER GARLINGHOUSE, CCR 3358
21	
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5	
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1	LACEY, WASHINGTON; DECEMBER 12, 2019
2	9:30 A.M.
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4	PROCEEDINGS
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6	JUDGE PEARSON: Let's go ahead and be on the
7	record. Good morning. We're here today for a
8	prehearing conference in Docket TP-190976, which is
9	captioned Washington Utilities and Transportation
10	Commission versus Puget Sound Pilots.
11	My name is Rayne Pearson and with me are
12	Chair Danner, Commissioner Rendahl, and Commissioner
13	Balasbas who will be co-presiding with me in this
14	matter.
15	So let's start by taking appearances and
16	addressing the petition for intervention, and let's
17	begin with Puget Sound Pilots.
18	MR. WILEY: Thank you, Your Honor. You can
19	hear me okay?
20	JUDGE PEARSON: Yes.
21	MR. WILEY: David Wiley along with Blair
22	Fassburg for the Pilots. Also in the hearing room is
23	associated counsel, Jeffrey Goltz.
24	JUDGE PEARSON: Okay. Thank you.
25	And for Staff?

1	MR. FUKANO: Harry Fukano, Assistant
2	Attorney General, and Sally Brown, Senior Assistant
3	or Assistant Attorney General, here on behalf of
4	Commission Staff.
5	JUDGE PEARSON: Thank you.
6	And for Pacific Merchant Shipping
7	Association?
8	MS. DeLAPPE: Michelle DeLappe on behalf of
9	PMSA. Thank you.
10	JUDGE PEARSON: Okay. Thank you.
11	Is there anyone else in the room or on the
12	conference line who wishes to enter an appearance?
13	Okay. Hearing nothing, that brings us to
14	the petition for intervention. Pacific Merchant
15	Shipping Association, which I think I will refer to as
16	PMSA going forward, meets the statutory definition of a
17	person with a substantial interest and is therefore
18	granted intervention in this proceeding on that basis.
19	And I assume, because no one else entered an
20	appearance, that there are no other parties seeking to
21	intervene in this proceeding?
22	Okay. Hearing nothing, I just want to
23	remind the parties that the Commission requires
24	electronic filing of all documents in formal
25	proceedings, and the Commission's rules provide for

1	electronic service of documents as well. So the
2	Commission will serve the parties electronically and the
3	parties will serve each other electronically.
4	If any party has not yet designated a lead
5	representative for service, please do so via an email to
6	me as soon as possible, and my email address is
7	rayne.pearson@utc.wa.gov. And also, if anyone would
8	like to add names and email addresses of other
9	representatives or support staff who should receive
10	electronic courtesy copies of all documents filed in
11	this proceeding, please email me that contact
12	information as well.
13	With respect to data requests, parties
14	usually request of each other at the outset of discovery
15	that any data requests and responses be shared with
16	every other party to a proceeding, and to eliminate this
17	extra step, I intend to include in the prehearing
18	conference order a requirement that the parties share
19	all data request responses with every other party. Is
20	there any objection to including this requirement?
21	MS. BROWN: No.
22	MR. FUKANO: No.
23	JUDGE PEARSON: Okay. Hearing nothing, I
24	will include that in the order. And just to clarify,
25	responses to data requests should be shared only among

1	the parties and should not be filed with the records
2	center or sent to the Commissioners or myself.
3	So that brings us to the procedural
4	schedule. I understand that there was a proposed
5	procedural schedule circulated among the parties, but it
6	sounded like as of late last evening, there was not
7	complete consensus on that schedule. So do we need to
8	take a recess to allow the parties time to have a
9	conversation?
10	MR. WILEY: I think a five-minute recess
11	might be advantageous.
12	JUDGE PEARSON: Okay. So that's fine.
13	I think if you anticipate, it will only be
14	five minutes. Are you all fine with just stepping into
15	the conference room across the hall?
16	Okay. And then, Mr. Fukano, if you just
17	want to grab us out of the room when you're ready, then
18	we'll come back.
19	MR. FUKANO: Certainly.
20	JUDGE PEARSON: Okay. Then we are in
21	recess.
22	(A break was taken from
23	9:34 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.)
24	JUDGE PEARSON: Let's be back on the record.
25	Who would like to give us an update of the

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MR. WILEY: I will try first, Your Honor.

Unfortunately, we weren't able to work out mutually convenient or preferred dates. We -- we have talked to the Staff about their proposal to extend or modify the schedule. We were okay with that. We're having difficulty on the PMSA. So unfortunately, I know you would prefer not to have to be involved probably, we're going to have to leave it somewhat to your discretion.

We have -- I know, Your Honor, that we've tried to find out the Commissioners' schedules, which, after all, are the most determinative points, and I -- I gathered that June was tough, May was better for the hearing, but we -- I think Ms. DeLappe would like it to be in July. So we've got some difficulties scheduling-wise.

JUDGE PEARSON: Go ahead, Ms. DeLappe.

MS. DeLAPPE: Thank you. We've been -- as you know for PMSA, it's our first time in the UTC process. We're very happy to be in this process. We've been looking at other general rate proceeding schedules to try to gauge reasonableness, especially because we believe that there -- it's important to have an opportunity for robust discovery and preparation for a very different process that we're embarking on.

So for us, this -- the front-loading of the proposed schedule was problematic for that opportunity. We're looking at an evidentiary hearing in early July and are hopeful that the Commissioners and that Your Honor would be available for something in early July.

JUDGE PEARSON: Okay. And then what are your concerns with the remainder of the procedural schedule or are you fine with the timing in between the other filing deadlines and are you proposing that they just be adjusted forward?

MS. DeLAPPE: We would be looking at I think mid April for the inter- -- Staff and intervenor responsive testimony and exhibits to provide sufficient time for all the working through the data requests in particular. We'd be looking at the rebuttal testimony deadline being about 22 days before the hearing, the discovery cutoff 15 days before the hearing, and then just two rounds of simultaneous briefing, initial briefs and reply -- reply briefs so we could provide about a hundred days from the evidentiary hearing to the suspension date.

JUDGE PEARSON: Okay. Let's hear from Staff about their ideas on the proposed schedule.

MR. FUKANO: Staff was generally agreeable to the proposed schedule circulated by the Pilots with

1	two significant changes. We had al we had asked
2	that the responsive testimony deadline set currently on
3	February 18th be adjusted to February 21st to the end of
4	that week and that the evidentiary hearing date be moved
5	from May 11th to May 27th to accommodate witness
6	unavailability.
7	JUDGE PEARSON: Okay. And does Staff have
8	any objection to PMSA's proposal?
9	MR. FUKANO: Subject to check with the
10	remainder of Staff witnesses, we don't have any
11	objection at this time.
12	JUDGE PEARSON: Okay. And so, Mr. Wiley,
13	what are your concerns about moving the hearing a little
14	bit farther out?
15	MR. WILEY: Thank you, Your Honor. We we
16	also are new to this process in terms of of the rate
17	setting as you know for for PSP, so we both share
18	that. We also have have looked at comparative
19	schedules both with energy cases that you're very
20	familiar with and with transportation cases where there
21	is a shorter suspension period. And we've tried to
22	build in sort of a compromise approach on on that.
23	I don't I don't know anything about the
24	Commissioners' schedules in July. Obviously July
25	before July 4th is prob the first part of July is

1 typically problematic for vacation schedules, that would 2 include yours truly too. But I don't think that -- we 3 filed on November 20th, and I didn't think that -- that 4 what we were proposing was compressing the -- the 5 intervenor or Staff testimony period. We obviously 6 don't want to -- to, you know, make them uncomfortable, 7 but we also want to give you adequate time, and because 8 this is the first time we have been in this process, we 9 also did include -- we didn't do simultaneous briefs, we 10 did an opening response and reply to mirror the -- the 11 way evidence is presented in the hearing. So we did try 12 to accommodate that. 13 One other thing that we haven't provided for 14 that we -- we are not opposed to is a public hearing 15 comment period if the Commissioners would like that. So 16 we are certainly flexible in terms of adding some phases 17 in. We thought that the -- the direct response and 18 reply was really a logical interval according to the 19 Commissioners' schedule availability from what we were 20 aware of. 21 JUDGE PEARSON: So I do have another 22 question. Initially in my conversations with 23 Mr. Fassburg, you indicated that the hearing, that we 24 may need to reserve four or five days for a hearing, but

I see that the proposed procedural schedule submitted

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1 just shows one day. 2 MR. WILEY: Thank you. Ms. DeLappe asked 3 about that too. That was just the start date that I 4 intended to communicate. I wasn't clear and I 5 apologize. I -- I think with 11 witnesses for the 6 petitioner, we're going to need more than two days, but 7 that is just my projection. I don't know what you feel 8 or what the Commissioners feel. JUDGE PEARSON: Okay. So I see a couple of 10 the issues right now. 11 Ms. DeLappe, your proposed schedule of 12 filing rebuttal testimony 22 days before hearing gives, 13 you know, on our end 16 days less than what is in the 14 schedule proposed by the Pilots, which would give our 15 staff and our policy advisers 38 days prior to the 16 hearing to review all of that rebuttal testimony. But I 17 do agree that rather than the three rounds of briefing, 18 we will limit it to two rounds of simultaneous briefing 19 following the hearing. 20 We're going to confer for just one moment. 21 We'll be off the record. 22 (Pause in the proceedings.) 23 JUDGE PEARSON: Back on the record. 24 MS. BROWN: I just would like to make it 25

clear that lead Staff analyst will be out of the country

1	overseas and unavailable from April 23rd through May 20.
2	So I would appreciate your factoring that into any
3	scheduling that you consider. Thank you.
4	JUDGE PEARSON: Okay. So in that respect,
5	the week of May 11th will not work for Staff?
6	MS. BROWN: Correct.
7	JUDGE PEARSON: Okay. Thank you for
8	clarifying that.
9	We'll be off the record briefly.
LO	(Pause in the proceedings.)
L1	JUDGE PEARSON: We're back on the record.
L2	So we will take all of the parties' requests under
L3	advisement and come up with a procedural schedule that
L4	will be memorialized in the prehearing conference order,
L5	bearing in mind that the effective date will be what
L6	ultimately controls the timing of the proceeding.
L7	Okay. So moving on to other matters. Under
L8	WAC 480-07-461(b), the deadline for filing errata sheets
L9	to exhibits may be established in the prehearing
20	conference order. Does anyone have an objection to
21	setting a deadline a week prior to the evidentiary
22	hearing for the filing of errata sheets?
23	MR. FUKANO: No objection from Staff.
24	MR. WILEY: No objection from the
25	petitioner.

1	MS. DeLAPPE: And no objection from PMSA.
2	JUDGE PEARSON: Okay, great. Then I will
3	incorporate that date into the prehearing conference
4	order.
5	Is there anything else that we need to
6	address today?
7	MR. FUKANO: Would the Commission also be
8	issuing protective orders in this case?
9	JUDGE PEARSON: So the Commission is not
10	statutorily authorized to enter a protective order in
11	this docket, so parties may not make confidential
12	filings.
13	MR. FUKANO: Would the Commission not have
14	authority under its WACs to issue a protective order for
15	the adjudication?
16	JUDGE PEARSON: Correct.
17	MS. BROWN: But, you know, we still would
18	defer to either the Pilots or the shippers on that
19	point, but
20	JUDGE PEARSON: Okay. Yeah, under our view,
21	we don't have statutory authority to enter a protective
22	issue in this docket.
23	MR. FUKANO: Understood.
24	MR. WILEY: That's a hill I've died on
25	previously in [inaudible], Your Honor, so I understand

that.

MS. BROWN: You're still with us, Mr. Wiley.

MR. WILEY: You had to notice that.

There is one other issue that we have raised at least earlier in the rulemaking. I would like my colleague to more specifically address it since he has done the review of the issue, and that's Mr. Goltz.

The -- as you know, under the statute the Board of Pilotage Commissioners is an -- is a potential advisor to you should you seek their advice during this proceeding. There are some practical issues we wanted

to ask about so that we're clear hopefully from the

that up that I would ask Mr. Goltz to address.

start before discovery begins, et cetera, and we clear

MR. GOLTZ: Thank you. Good morning.

Jeffrey Goltz, Cascadia Law Group, assisting the Puget
Sound Pilots on some issues, this being one of them.

So this was an issue of somewhat unique provision in the statute in RCW 81.116.020 that authorizes the Commission, quote, in exercising duties under the section, the Commission may request assistance from the Board, being Board of Pilotage Commissioners.

And I know that some members of the Commission, if not all members of the Commission, are familiar with the genesis of that -- of that provision.

It does not modify in any way the ex parte law under the Administrative Procedure Act RCW 34.05.455. So it seems to us that those two provisions, the ex parte provision and this special provision of the Pilotage statute, need to be -- need to be read -- read together.

And the reason we're raising this is several interests that I think is shared by everybody. One is a fair and transparent proceeding, that no one stubs their toes on any procedural issues, which would jeopardize the proceeding. And we want to get this right. We want to make sure there is a full record, that everyone has access to appropriate information.

So it seems to me that there's kind of three ways, three general ways that this can be accomplished, all of them requiring, as the statute says, a request from the Commission. Not something the Commission has to do, but it's authorized to do that. So the question is, to what extent should representatives, staff, or members of the Board of Pilotage Commissioners be on the Commissioners' side of the ex parte wall. And there is three general options. One is to have nobody on the ex parte on the Commissioners' side, one is to have everybody on the Commissioners' side, and the other one is to kind of have some on and some -- some on your side

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and some not on your side.

So taking those in order, our preference would be to have nobody on the Commissioners' side.

Basically, make -- that seems to be the most transparent. If the Commission wishes to request information, it can do so with a request that would be public akin to, if not denominated a bench request, everybody would have access to that same information, everybody would be able to respond to that information. It will be transparent, it will be open, and allow a maximum gathering of information.

Second option, another option is to have everybody on the BPC on your side of the ex parte wall. Besides needing a larger conference room, it would pose some problems. One problem is some members of the BPC are actually interested persons, and so that could pose a limitation. The ex parte wall says in 34.05.455 allows you to communicate with certain employees of the Commission and also other consultants. But the limitation is, the consultants can't be interested in the proceeding. So by law, you couldn't be consulting with people on your side of the ex parte wall that have an interest in the proceeding. That would eliminate at least some members of the BPC.

There's another reason why putting everyone

1	else except perhaps those few members on your side of
2	the ex parte wall is is problematic. In the course
3	of preparing the testimony, Pilots did obtain
4	information from the Board of Pilotage Commissioners,
5	appropriately so. I suspect that the PMSA will want to
6	respond to that and get some information from the Board
7	of Pilotage Commissioners. That makes sense.
8	Maybe this Commission Staff in responding
9	will want to get information from the Board of Pilotage
10	Commissioners. If you put everybody on the
11	Commissioners' side of the ex parte wall, who do they
12	talk to? How do they get that information? That
13	request for information by itself could be an ex parte
14	contact that would be prohibited.
15	So the third option is to have some people
16	there and some people not. Designate one or more people
17	to give you to provide that advice, you could request
18	that. That could be done. But then again, you have to
19	make our suggestion is to make that very, very clear
20	in the request and make it very, very clear who who
21	will have that access and make it clear that other

will have that access and make it clear that other
members and staff of the Board of Pilotage Commissioners
will not inadvertently or advertently make ex parte
contacts to that BPC representative that, in fact, would
have to be an ex parte wall constructed within the Board

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of Pilotage Commissioners.

I understand that Commissioner Balasbas at a BPC meeting gave a presentation on ex parte matters. That's really important and it's appreciated, but it is a little bit tricky. And the Commission -- this Commission has a long history of developing an ex parte wall. Everyone understands it, and so the Commission Staff won't be talking with the Commissioners about this case and they -- and won't be sending emails to the Commissioners about this case except on procedural matters as is authorized.

So our -- our suggestion is that this -- when, and if, a request is made for assistance, it be very clear how that relates to the ex parte rule -- pardon me, statute and practice, and whether it be -- our preference would be to have nobody on the ex parte -- on your side of the ex parte wall. That would be more transparent, it would allow gathering of information of all the parties to approach the BPC and get information, discuss things with them as well, and in the preparation of their -- of their cases. And as well, it would allow the Commission to obtain the information they wanted in the preparation of its order.

Barring that, I just suggest that it be very, very clear and transparent as to how this

1	operation will this request will be made and how it
2	will be implemented. So thank you.
3	JUDGE PEARSON: Thank you.
4	I would like to allow the other parties an
5	opportunity to respond.
6	Ms. DeLappe?
7	MS. DeLAPPE: I I don't have any
8	objection to the proposal that only select board members
9	be on the Commissioners' side of the ex parte wall.
10	JUDGE PEARSON: Okay.
11	MS. DeLAPPE: Yeah, as long as it's clear
12	how PMSA or any other party can make requests to the
13	BPC, that would be helpful. Thank you.
14	JUDGE PEARSON: Thank you.
15	And from Staff?
16	MR. FUKANO: Commission Staff believes that
17	the combination of the first and third options, both
18	through the use of bench requests and through the use of
19	designating specific individuals that the Commission
20	will communicate with on the Board, would be appropriate
21	in this context. It would give the Commission some
22	flexibility in how it wishes to request information from
23	the Board, and we think both of those options would
24	comply with the APA ex parte concerns.
25	JUDGE PEARSON: Okay. So can you just

clarify, are you saying that we would both designate individuals and then only communicate with those individuals through bench requests or are you saying it's one or the other?

MR. FUKANO: It could be one, the other, or both. I believe that a bench request being in the open and available to all parties would not violate any ex parte issues, but in the event the Commission would like to communicate specifically with the Board without the use of a bench request, it could outline a procedure by which -- similar to what the Pilots has suggested, which designates certain individuals as Commission contacts to avoid any inadvertent or advertent ex parte communication from other parties to that -- those designated individuals.

JUDGE PEARSON: Okay.

MR. GOLTZ: Can I just reply to that? I think it's important that -- that -- as I -- and I'm not familiar with the Board of Pilotage Commissioners' structure as much as almost everyone else at the table, but -- but the -- I understand it's fairly simple to -- confine a number of staff members and -- and so I think that the concern is that if you -- you want to leave sort of some staff members behind if you do decide to -- to invite somebody on your side of the ex parte wall,

1 you want to leave some staff members back there to deal 2 with -- with the requests that may be coming in on -- on 3 this matter. 4 And then you also have to make sure that 5 whatever -- I think the term is -- centric term would be 6 consultants under the ex parte law that whoever you 7 would request to serve as a, quote, consultant, unquote, 8 would be a person as statutorily required to -- who does 9 not have an interest in the outcome of the proceeding. 10 MR. FASSBURG: If I may, I would just like 11 to add one piece of information that you may be aware of 12 already, but I think helps clarify the concern about 13 option No. 3. In July, the Board of Pilotage 14 Commissioners took a vote to designate on its own who 15 would be those advisors, perhaps prematurely, and they 16 designated their entire staff including the chair. And 17 that would create some of these logistical issues that 18 Mr. Goltz was referring to. 19 JUDGE PEARSON: Okay. Thank you. 20 So I think we'll take a brief recess now. 21 So we will be off the record and we will --22 Oh, go ahead. 23 MS. DeLAPPE: Is this the final chance to 24 get to ask questions? I have a couple of other things. 25 JUDGE PEARSON: Oh, go ahead.

1	MS. DeLAPPE: Thank you. I was just waiting
2	until it came around to my side. I did want to just say
3	that one of our experts will be out of the country July
4	6th through 15th, so I hope that that can be
5	accommodated in the scheduling. And then I wanted to
6	confirm that the rules discovery rules 400 through
7	425 will be instituted for this these proceedings.
8	JUDGE PEARSON: Yes, those will be made
9	available in the suspension order that was issued.
10	MS. DeLAPPE: Okay. Great. Thank you.
11	JUDGE PEARSON: Okay. And you said July 6th
12	through
13	MS. DeLAPPE: 15th.
14	JUDGE PEARSON: Okay.
15	MS. DeLAPPE: Thank you.
16	JUDGE PEARSON: Okay. Then we will be in
17	recess.
18	MR. FUKANO: And sorry, one further
19	clarification from Staff, that Staff would prefer the
20	third option where certain individuals on the Board were
21	designated, but believe that bench requests or the third
22	option would be appropriate.
23	JUDGE PEARSON: Okay.
24	MS. BROWN: I just want to add one thing
25	while we're all going around the room talking and that

1	is that unlike I just want to you know, unlike a
2	lot of public servants we're hearing about in the news,
3	we have the utmost confidence in your integrity and your
4	ability to perform the functions of your position in a
5	manner consistent with the law. And I just wanted to
6	say that.
7	I mean, so to a certain extent I mean, to
8	a certain extent, there is a certain element of trust
9	too that you will take your position seriously and you
LO	will render a decision based on record evidence only.
L1	And I just felt compelled to share that this morning.
L2	Thank you.
L3	JUDGE PEARSON: Thank you.
L4	MR. WILEY: And I would actually echo
L5	Ms. Brown's statement too. I've never had a concern in
L6	41 years on that issue. It's the statute, the new
L7	statute that's throwing me for a loop.
L8	JUDGE PEARSON: Okay. Can we take a recess
L9	now? Okay. We are
20	MS. BROWN: Wait.
21	JUDGE PEARSON: we will be off the
22	record.
23	(A break was taken from
24	10:08 a.m. to 10:22 a.m.)
25	JUDGE PEARSON: Okay. So let's be back on

1	the record. We took a moment to discuss and we have
2	reached a decision. As Ms. Brown and Mr. Wiley stated,
3	under the APA, we understand that we may only make a
4	decision based on the evidence before us in the record.
5	We will designate the executive director and the chair
6	of the Board as the individuals from whom we will seek
7	assistance if necessary. And we will lay out the
8	process and expectations around ex parte communications
9	in the prehearing conference order, and we have the
LO	utmost trust and confidence that the Board will
L1	understand, respect, and adhere to the ex parte rules.
L2	We intend to communicate directly with the designated
L3	board members for consultation purposes only, and we
L4	will memorialize this decision in the prehearing
L5	conference recorder.
L6	So is there anything else that we need to
L7	address while we're all here today?
L8	MR. FUKANO: None from Staff.
L9	MR. WILEY: Your Honor, just to clarify, the
20	schedule will be addressed in the prehearing conference
21	order
22	JUDGE PEARSON: It certainly will.
23	MR. WILEY: when you have more time to
24	talk. Okay.
25	JUDGE PEARSON: Yes.

1	MR. WILEY: Fair enough.
2	MS. DeLAPPE: None from PMSA. Thank you.
3	JUDGE PEARSON: Okay. So thank you all very
4	much for being here today, and we are adjourned.
5	(Adjourned at 10:23 a.m.)
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2	CERTIFICATE
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4	STATE OF WASHINGTON
5	COUNTY OF THURSTON
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7	I, Tayler Garlinghouse, a Certified Shorthand
8	Reporter in and for the State of Washington, do hereby
9	certify that the foregoing transcript is true and
10	accurate to the best of my knowledge, skill and ability.
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