



March 17, 2020

Captain Jeremy Smith  
Captain of the Port/Sector Commander  
US Coast Guard Sector Columbia River  
2185 SE 12<sup>th</sup> Place  
Warrenton, OR 97146

Dear Captain Smith,



We are especially grateful to the US Coast Guard Sector Columbia River and MSU Portland for the tremendous outreach and coordination efforts regarding the Novel WUHAN Coronavirus (COVID-19). As COVID-19 continues to spread throughout our region, we are now seeing attempts to contain the spread with orders to “shelter in place,” namely in the San Francisco Bay Area. As such, we respectfully request in advance, exemptions to future “shelter in place” type orders to facilitate the flow of goods and commerce.



The Columbia River trade corridor is the lifeblood of our regional economy, supporting 50 million tons of foreign trade at a value of over \$24 billion annually. The Columbia River is the nation’s number one wheat export gateway and number two for corn and soybean exports. It is the third largest grain export gateway in the world, as well as the West Coast’s leader in dry bulks, mineral bulk, wood exports and auto imports and exports.

**We ask that members of the Columbia River Steamship Operators’ Association, members of the Columbia River Towboat Association, and our state licensed pilot organizations; Columbia River Pilots, Columbia River Bar Pilots, and Coos Bay/Yaquina Bay Pilots continue to be permitted to service vessels calling our region.** The facilitation of commerce and the import and export of goods is extremely important to not only the states of Washington and Oregon, but our global economy. We ask that the importance of our maritime industry be taken into consideration and that the complexities and dynamics of world markets and global supply chains be reflected should future “shelter in place” type orders be issued in our region.



Our organizations hold paramount the health and safety of our maritime community and river system overall. The seriousness that we place on the worldwide outbreak of COVID-19 can be evidenced by our early coordination efforts and conversations with the USCG, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), US Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Oregon Health Authority, Washington State Department of Health, and Multnomah County Health regarding this issue, beginning in January 2020.



A large portion of the work in the maritime industry mandates that our members board the vessel. Steamship operators/vessel agents need to access port facilities and board vessels for entry formalities with CBP, inspections with National Cargo Bureau (NCB) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), for cargo calculations with NCB which determine vessel stability and safety, as well as interface with the vessel and the elevator. The towing community provides for ship assist to and from the berth, into and out of the anchorages and stern buoys, pilot transportation, the movement of goods and commerce, and any emergency situations as deemed necessary. Pilots are regulated by the state of Oregon for the Columbia/Willamette River system, Coos Bay, and Yaquina Bay to ensure safe navigation. Other needs include port security, terminal and grain elevator boarding after the vessel is alongside, crew transport and launch operations, ship stores, medical providers, etc.

Established in 1922, the CRSOA consists of members and associate members representing ship owners, operators, agents, tow companies and bunkering companies as well as terminal operators, launch companies, and ports along the Oregon Coast and Columbia/Willamette River Systems. The mission of the CRSOA is to facilitate trade, provide business leadership, exercise principles of environmental stewardship, serve as an industry focal point, and promote

operating policies and practices that are safe, reliable, efficient, and cost effective.

The Columbia River Towboat Association promotes the common interests of its members in commercial navigation on the Columbia/Snake river system. Membership is open to all persons, firms or corporations engaged in the operating of freight boats, passenger and tour boats, towboats, terminals or barges or other water transportation for hire on the Columbia, Willamette, or Snake rivers or their tributaries.

Columbia River Pilots are an association of 40+ professional mariners licensed by the State of Oregon to provide maritime pilotage services to all ports on the lower Columbia and Willamette Rivers. Our pilots possess extensive navigational experience, local knowledge and ship-handling skills and are charged with safely and efficiently piloting vessels in all weather conditions, at all hours of the day and night, 365 days a year.

The Columbia River Bar Pilots were established in 1846 to ensure the safety of ships, crew and cargoes crossing the treacherous Columbia River Bar, which is recognized as one of the most dangerous and challenging navigated stretches of water in the world.

The Coos Bay/Yaquina Bay Pilots Association assures timely vessel movements in and out of the harbor 24 hours a day, year-round with few restrictions for weather or ocean conditions, thanks in part to Coos Bay's temperate climate.

We sincerely appreciate the efforts of the United States Coast Guard to not only manage this pandemic, but to continually identify navigational challenges facing our river system and efforts to provide the resources and services that promote safe and efficient navigation of our world class river system. We urge you to continue to permit members of the following organizations to service vessels calling our region: Columbia River Steamship Operators' Association, members of the Columbia River Towboat Association, and our state licensed pilot organizations; Columbia River Pilots, Columbia River Bar Pilots, and Coos Bay/Yaquina Bay Pilots Association.

Should you have any questions, please contact Kate Mickelson at the Columbia River Steamship Operators' Association at 503.505.3008 or via email at [kate@crsoa.net](mailto:kate@crsoa.net).

Wishing you good health,



Kate Mickelson, Executive Director  
Columbia River Steamship Operators'  
Association



Capt. Jeremy Nielsen, President  
Columbia River Pilots



David Konz, President  
Columbia River Towboat Association



Captain Dan Jordan, President  
Columbia River Bar Pilots



Captain George Wales, President  
Coos Bay/Yaquina Bay Pilots Association

Cc: Governor Kate Brown, State of Oregon  
Governor Jay Inslee, State of Washington  
Mayor Ted Wheeler, City of Portland  
Deborah Kafoury, Multnomah County Chair  
Andy Phelps, Director, Oregon Office of Emergency Management

Ian Bow, Assistant Area Port Director (Tactical), US Customs and Border Protection  
Captain Giovanni Vairo, Senior Surveyor, National Cargo Bureau  
Randall R. (Randy) Deike, Federal Manager, USDA/AMS/FGIS  
Philip Garcia, Program Manager, Washington Department of Agriculture  
Will Isom, Executive Director, Port of Astoria  
Doug Hayes, Executive Director, Port of Columbia County  
Dan Stahl, Interim Chief Executive Director, Port of Longview  
Mark Wilson, Executive Director, Port of Kalama  
Julianna Marler, Chief Executive Officer, Port of Vancouver  
Keith Leavitt, Chief Commercial Officer, Port of Portland  
Kristin Meira, Executive Director, Pacific Northwest Waterways Association  
Marc Warren, Executive Director, Oregon Board of Maritime Pilots  
James Thompson, Executive Director, Washington Public Ports Association  
Mark Landauer, Executive Director, Oregon Public Ports Association  
Elizabeth Wainwright, Executive Director, Merchants Exchange  
Holly Robinson, General Manager, Maritime Fire and Safety Association  
Melissa Wirthlin, President, Maritime Commerce Club  
Board of Directors, Columbia River Steamship Operators' Association  
Darien Loiselle, Schwabe Williamson and Wyatt, General Counsel to Columbia River  
Steamship Operators' Association  
Mike Haglund, Haglund Kelley LLP, General Counsel to Columbia River Bar Pilots  
Todd Zilbert, General Counsel to Columbia River Pilots,  
Coos Bay/Yaquina Bay Pilots Assn.