

Columbia River Vessel Traffic Evaluation and Safety Risk Assessment (CRV TSA)

The Issue



With increased interest in moving commodities through Pacific Northwest ports, an assessment of current safeguards and improvements in vessel traffic management is needed. This will ensure our waterway remains navigable

for the benefit of our region.

As one of the West Coast's primary trade gateways, the Columbia River is a vital connection point between Washington – the most trade dependent state in the nation -- and world-wide markets. A leader in timber, grain and mineral exports, our economy relies on a safe and sustainable transportation network to move goods to international markets.

Currently, new energy transfer terminals are proposed on the lower Columbia River. As a result, the 2015 Legislature passed ESHB 1449 – an act relating to oil transportation safety - directing the Department of Ecology to complete a systemic evaluation of preventative/response measures currently in place, as well as identify gaps to be improved.

The Solution

Focused attention on oil-spill prevention is needed to produce targeted, cost-effective mitigation measures and ensure the state's public health and safety, and environmental protection.

Upon completion, the assessment will include a list of safety recommendations, and analyze the amount of new oil being transferred onto vessels as a result of rail traffic.

WHO WILL PARTICIPATE?

Ecology will work with waterway users and stakeholders to ensure the most accurate and useful information is available:

- **U.S. Coast Guard**
- **Oregon Board of Maritime Pilots**
- **Columbia River Harbor Safety Committee**
- **Columbia River Bar Pilots**
- **Columbia River Pilots**
- **Area tribes**
- **Public ports in Oregon and Washington**
- **Local governments**
- **Other appropriate entities**

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Special accommodations

If you need this publication in an alternate format, call the Spills Program at 360-407-7455. Persons with hearing loss, call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability, call 877-833-6341.

How it will Work

The Department of Ecology will complete an evaluation and assessment of vessel traffic management and vessel traffic safety within and near the mouth of the Columbia River.

The evaluation and assessment must include:

- the need for tug escorts, oil tankers, articulated tug and barges, and other towed waterborne vessels and barges;
- best achievable protections;
- required tug capabilities to ensure focus vessels are escorted safely;
- an analysis of the amount of new oil being transferred onto vessels as a result of rail traffic;
- recommendations for vessel traffic management and vessel traffic safety on the river;
- and recommendations for tug escort requirements for vessels transporting oil as bulk cargo.

Timeline

Work to complete the assessment is already underway to meet the following legislative deadlines:

- Draft evaluation and assessment due December 15, 2017
- Final evaluation and assessment due June 30, 2018

Funding

ESHB 1449/15-17 provides funding to update the Puget Sound VTRA and develop one for the Columbia River:

- Fiscal Year 2016 \$200K
- Fiscal Year 2017 \$200K
- Fiscal Year 2018 \$40K
- Fiscal Year 2019 \$40K



Additional staff is also provided to support the work. As money becomes available in future biennia, Ecology will maintain and keep the VTRAs current. On-going risk assessments in other areas of the state will also be conducted. Funding will also support continuous reductions in cross-border marine risks such as communication and mitigation activities related to traffic in waterways shared with British Columbia and Oregon.

Helpful links to ESHB 1449, SSB 6052 and fiscal information

Ecology Spills Program Columbia River vessel traffic safety evaluation and assessment:

www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/spills/OilMovement/RiskAssessment.html

Final bill passed into law:

<http://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2015-16/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1449-S.SL.pdf>.

Final budget (with Ecology's appropriations starting on page 111):

<http://leap.wa.gov/leap/budget/lbns/1517Omni6052-S.SL.pdf>.

Budget detail (with Ecology's activities starting on page 220):

http://leap.wa.gov/leap/Budget/Detail/2015/csAgyDetail_0629.pdf