



LOWER COLUMBIA REGION
HARBOR SAFETY COMMITTEE

Lower Columbia Region Harbor Safety Committee General Membership Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 13, 2026, | 1415-1545hrs

Port of Vancouver & Virtual vis MS Teams

DRAFT

Officers:

Chair: Larry Landgraver, *Port of Longview*

Vice Chair: Ross McDonald, *Sause Bros.*

Secretary/Treasurer: Carl Bertapelle, *Merchants Exchange*

Association Account Specialist: Brianna Derham, *Merchants Exchange*

1. Welcome
 - a. The meeting was called to order at 1416 hours by Larry Landgraver.
2. Safety Moment – Port of Vancouver
 - a. Kenny Davais from Port of Vancouver provided the Safety Moment. Zach Merrill, Port of Vancouver gave a brief presentation on the organization's background and goals.
3. Additions/Corrections to Agenda
 - a. No additions or corrections were offered.
4. Meeting Minutes from March 11, 2026
 - a. The minutes of March 11, 2026 General Membership Meeting were presented.
 - b. No amendments were offered.
5. Board of Directors Meeting Update
 - a. The board reviewed and approved the minutes of the March 11, 2026 Board of Directors meeting.
 - b. The financial reports for March and April 2026 were reviewed and approved as presented.
 - c. Motions were made and approved to remove Vanessa Green, Clean Rivers Cooperative, from the Board of Directors and appoint Eric Schober, Port of Kalama, to complete her term.



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6. Standing Subcommittee Assignments & Discussions:
 - a. Membership Outreach Subcommittee (Carl Bertapelle)
 - i. Carl Bertapelle reported that there were no new members and that McCall Oil has elected not to renew its membership.
 - b. Navigation Subcommittee (Capt. Steve Ackerman/Capt. Nick Ritter)
 - i. Captain Ackerman provided the Navigation Subcommittee report, noting that there are no major new developments at this time.
 - ii. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers continues ongoing work on pile dikes and wing dams along the Columbia River. These efforts are considered important for maintaining channel integrity, supporting river flow, and aiding in natural scouring, and the Subcommittee expressed continued support for this work.
 - iii. The Subcommittee and river pilots continue to advocate for progress on bridge clearance sensors at both the Lewis and Clark Bridge (Longview) and the St. Johns Bridge. These sensors are viewed as critical for safely accommodating larger vessels accessing upriver ports, including facilities in Portland and Vancouver. Progress on this initiative has slowed, and stakeholders are seeking renewed momentum, including potential support through Washington State legislative funding.
 - iv. Discussion also included the proposed channel realignment at Longview. Coordination with the U.S. Coast Guard and other stakeholders is ongoing to formalize the alignment and allow dredging and related improvements to proceed.
 - v. Additionally, the possibility of increased dredging in Astoria anchorages was discussed. While not yet finalized, the Corps of Engineers has considered addressing high spots in these areas during routine summer channel maintenance to improve anchorage usability.
 - vi. Water conditions were also reviewed. While regional snowpack levels have been lower than normal, it was noted that British Columbia snowpack is significantly above average (approximately 140% of normal), which may help sustain river flows through the summer months.
 - vii. It was further noted that bridge clearance sensor funding may be included in the Washington State transportation budget; this will be reviewed to confirm status and potential implications.
 - viii. No further updates were provided.



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- c. Harbor Safety Plan Subcommittee (Ross McDonald)
 - i. No updates.
- 7. Regular Committee Reports & Agency Updates
 - a. Columbia River Bar Pilots Updates
 - i. Representatives from the Bar Pilots reported that conditions have stabilized following the winter season, with expectations for smoother operations moving into the summer months.
 - ii. Pile dike work near the jetties has largely been completed, with remaining work progressing upriver. Sand Island was noted as an area of current focus, with ongoing efforts to address conditions there.
 - iii. Cruise ship operations are underway for the season. Recent activity included two vessels (approximately 1,100 feet in length), with one anchored in Youngs Bay and another berthed at the dock due to size limitations within the main anchorage. Support operations, including passenger transport between vessels and shore, were reported to have proceeded smoothly overall.
 - iv. The cruise season is expected to be average in activity, with the season currently estimated to be approximately one-third to halfway complete.
 - v. No additional issues or concerns were reported.
 - b. Columbia River Pilots Updates
 - i. Representatives from the River Pilots provided an update on recent activities and training efforts.
 - ii. Pilots recently met at Terminal 2 to review a replacement stern buoy intended for lower buoy number one. The group evaluated potential design and safety improvements, and the discussion highlighted the importance of establishing standardized procedures to enhance safety during these operations.
 - iii. Pilot launch training was completed in collaboration with Maritime Pilots Institute (MPI). The week-long session included participation from multiple launch service providers and provided an opportunity to review current practices, share best practices, and identify areas for improvement. Participants reported the training as beneficial and a valuable learning experience.
 - iv. Upcoming activities include planned simulator training in Seattle, where pilots will develop and refine scenarios focused on the Longview Bridge.



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These scenarios are intended to address emergency situations such as loss of propulsion or steering.

- v. An update was also provided regarding vessel draft considerations. While there has been no formal change in draft restrictions, vessels may operate at up to 44 feet of draft when sufficient water levels are available. However, operational windows remain limited due to tidal and river conditions.
 - vi. Discussion also touched on concerns regarding woody debris in the river. Coordination with the Oregon Department of State Lands is ongoing to better understand mitigation efforts, though no specific updates were available at this time.
 - vii. No further updates were provided.
- c. MARAD – West Coast Update (Xochitl Castaneda-virtually)
 - i. No attendance/updates.
 - d. US Army Corps of Engineers Update (Casey O'Donnell)
 - i. No attendance/updates.
 - e. NOAA – Office of Coast Survey Update (Laura Pagano-virtually)
 - i. No attendance/updates.
 - f. United States Coast Guard – Sector Columbia River Update (USCG Personnel)
 - i. U.S. Coast Guard representatives provided an operational and administrative update. It was reported that the Coast Guard is currently fully funded through the end of September and has resumed normal operations, including in-person meeting attendance, travel, and engagement with stakeholders. Members were encouraged to continue sharing invitations for meetings and events.
 - ii. The Coast Guard noted that they were unable to attend the National Conference but extended congratulations to the Committee on receiving the Distinguished Harbor Safety Committee Award.
 - iii. An update was provided on planning efforts for the upcoming Rose Festival and Fleet Week. Coordination efforts are ongoing, with participation expected from the U.S. Navy, Canadian Navy, and Coast Guard assets. While no large cutters are anticipated, smaller vessels will be



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present. The Coast Guard indicated that planning is progressing smoothly and aims to minimize disruptions to maritime operations.

- iv. A security zone will be established on the Willamette River between the Steel and Hawthorne Bridges during Fleet Week. The zone is scheduled to be in effect from 12:00 p.m. on June 2 through 12:00 p.m. on June 8. Vessel traffic in this area will be restricted during this time; however, operators may coordinate with the Coast Guard for pre-screening to facilitate transit when appropriate.
- v. Members were encouraged to raise any concerns related to Fleet Week activities so they can be incorporated into planning efforts. The Coast Guard also noted availability to address additional questions related to waterways management, navigation, or investigations.
- vi. Additional discussion included ongoing updates to bridge survey data, including improved measurements for bascule bridge clearances, which are being submitted to NOAA for incorporation into navigation resources.
- vii. No further updates were provided.

8. Old Business

- a. 2026 Regional Conference – Newport, OR – July 8, 2026
 - i. Members of the Regional Conference Task force provided the following updates to the group:
 - 1. The Regional Conference is scheduled for July 8, 2026 at the Oregon State University Hatfield Marine Science Center.
 - 2. A no-host happy hour will take place the evening before, as well as a private tour of the Hatfield Marine Science Center.
 - 3. Registration will be opening soon.

9. New Business

- a. Distinguished Harbor Safety Committee Award - 2026 National Conference
 - i. The Committee reported that the Lower Columbia Region Harbor Safety Committee was awarded the Distinguished Harbor Safety Committee Award at the recent National Harbor Safety Conference. The award, presented by the U.S. Coast Guard Commandant, recognizes the Committee's collective efforts and contributions to maritime safety.
 - ii. Members who attended the conference shared highlights, noting strong participation from the Columbia River region. It was emphasized that the



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award reflects the collaborative work and engagement of the entire Committee.

- iii. A presentation of conference photos and key takeaways was provided. Discussion included lessons learned from incident response case studies, mitigation strategies, and varying practices among harbor safety committees nationwide. Topics such as tug escort requirements, air gap/bridge clearance sensors, and risk mitigation efforts were discussed, with particular interest in how other regions have implemented these measures.
 - iv. The Committee also highlighted its recent work on channel realignment and the strength of coordination with the U.S. Coast Guard, noting that this level of collaboration is not consistent across all regions. Additionally, it was observed that not all harbor safety committees maintain active or regularly updated harbor safety plans, underscoring the value of the Committee's ongoing efforts to keep its plan current.
 - v. Members expressed appreciation for the opportunity to participate in the conference and emphasized that the award is a reflection of the Committee's strong collaboration, industry engagement, and commitment to maintaining a safe and efficient waterway.
 - vi. No additional comments were provided.
- b. Next meeting – July 8, 2026 (Regional Harbor Safety Conference)
- i. Larry Landgraver reminded the group that the next meeting will be on the Regional Conference on July 8, 2026.

10. Good of the Order

- a. Kate Mickelson invited the General Membership meeting attendees to CRSOA's Spring Picnic that will take place on May 28th.
- b. Dena Horton provided an update and shared reflections on her participation in the 2026 National Conference.

11. Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 1511 hours.