



STATE OF WASHINGTON
BOARD OF PILOTAGE COMMISSIONERS

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2026 Number of Pilots Determination and Rationale

On May 21, 2026, the Washington State Board of Pilotage Commissioners (BPC or Board) voted to maintain the Authorized Number of Pilots in the Puget Sound Pilotage District at 60.

The BPC's authority for setting the number of pilots is found in [Chapter 88.16.035 \(1\)\(d\)](#) and [WAC 363-116-065](#) *Number of Pilots* describes the required and suggested parameters for determining the number of pilots.

On February 11, 2026, Pacific Merchant Shipping Association (PMSA) sent a letter to the BPC providing latest data on the decrease in pilotage assignments in 2025 within the Puget Sound Pilotage District. The letter suggested reducing the authorized number of pilots from 60 to 55, which initiated a review of the number of pilots per WAC 363-116-065.

At the February 19, 2026 meeting, the Board adopted a process for submittals and determination as well as guidelines for the submissions. These documents as well as the other documents that make up the record of this Board-adopted process were posted on the BPC's website at <https://pilotage.wa.gov/number-of-pilots.html>. The process directed BPC Staff to prepare a recommendation based on data received for the Board to review at the March 19, 2026 BPC meeting.

BPC Staff Recommendation

The recommendation was to keep the authorized number of pilots at 60 based on a forecasted assignment range of 7134 to 7491 (100% to 105% of the TAL for 58 pilots moving ships, plus 1 pilot president and 1 pilot NFFD (average) – Note: this recommendation was calculated prior to the possible identified traffic changes submitted by PSP and PMSA.

Stakeholders were directed to submit their comments to Board staff by EOD April 8, 2026 for consideration and discussion at the April 16, 2026 BPC meeting.

PSP Recommendation

With the known vessel traffic changes, PSP adjusted their assignment forecast from 7213 to 7099 per year, and divided that by 123 for 57.7 pilots, plus 1 pilot for president and 1 pilot NFFD, for a final recommendation of remaining at 60 pilots.

PMSA Recommendation:

The trailing 12 assignment count in February 2026 was 6985 and PMSA is forecasting an annual assignment count of 6972. Both numbers are below the forecasted annual assignment range of 7134 to 7491 that the current authorized number of pilots (60) is based on. PMSA is therefore requesting the authorized number of pilots be decreased.

The April 16 Board meeting provided an opportunity for stakeholders and the public to present their comments and answer questions.

At the May 21, 2026 BPC meeting, after dissemination of the data and discussion, the Board voted to adopt the staff recommendation of maintaining the Authorized Number of Pilots for the Puget Sound Pilotage District at 60 with Commissioners Tonn, Kirtley, Knutsen, Anthony, Hamilton, and Buroker in favor and Farrell, Drennen, and Tyler opposed.

Additional details of the conversations at the meetings can be found at <https://pilotage.wa.gov/meetings>.