

[EXTERNAL] Comment for today's Port meeting

Noemie Maxwell <noemie_maxwell@yahoo.com>

Tue 7/11/2023 9:05 AM

To:Commission-Public-Records <commission-public-records@portseattle.org>

WARNING: External email. Links or attachments may be unsafe.

Hello,

I'm hoping that, even though I'm a couple of minutes late in sending this, you would be able to include it as a comment for today's meeting.

Thank you very much,

Noemie Maxwell Vassialkis

Dear Commissioners,

I applaud the Commission for Order 2023-10, adopting principles to guide development of Port of Seattle's 6 environmental land stewardship efforts around trees, forest, and other habitat.

This is a significant step for the Port toward adopting a comprehensive approach to protecting trees, forest and other natural habitat on Port-owned land. Such an approach is critical for stewardship of these resources because our local forest and its connected waterways and wetlands - so important for public health and our quality of life - are an integrated system. I applaud, as well, the focus in this Order on environmental justice.

I hope that there will be an opportunity for the public to weigh in on this Order before it is finalized. One area that I note, in my quick reading of it, is that it does not appear to include a significant recognition of the value of proforestation - the practice of prioritizing the preservation of existing mature trees, wherever feasible, over replacing them with new ones.

Mature large-diameter trees can capture more toxic particulates, store "disproportionally massive amounts of carbon," and "fulfill a variety of unique ecological roles such as increasing drought-tolerance, reducing flooding from intense precipitation events, altering fire behavior, redistributing soil water, and acting as focal centers of mycorrhizal communication and resource sharing networks." (Mildrexler DJ, Berner LT, Law BE, Birdsey RA and Moomaw WR (2020) Large Trees Dominate Carbon Storage in Forests East of the Cascade Crest in the United States Pacific Northwest. *Front. For. Glob. Change* 3:594274. doi: 10.3389/ffgc.2020.594274)

Thank you,

Noemie Maxwell Vassilakis

[EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT for October 27, 2020: Reconsidering Cruise

Patrick McKee <patmckee@sbcglobal.net>

Tue 7/11/2023 8:49 AM

To:Commission-Public-Records <commission-public-records@portseattle.org>

WARNING: External email. Links or attachments may be unsafe.

Last Tuesday was the 4th of July. It was the hottest day in earth's recorded history - the hottest day in 120,000 years. When my infant grandson is your age this might well have been the coolest summer of his life. I'm sure this is as terrifying for you all as it is for me.

The mission statement of the Port of Seattle directs you to promote economic opportunities and quality of life in the region by advancing trade, travel, commerce, and job creation *in an equitable, accountable, and environmentally responsible manner*.

Yet over the past 20-plus years, the Port of Seattle has aggressively grown its non-essential Alaskan cruise business, in a manner that is none of these. Mega cruise ships pollute our waters, endanger our health, jeopardize our climate, overwhelm destination communities, and exploit onboard workers.

Commissioners correctly point out that Seattle is by far the largest beneficiary of the Alaska cruise business, in very real jobs and dollars: our economy gets the provision spend, the fuel revenue, the onshore servicing jobs, the overnight tourist stays at departure and return. But where's the accountability? The Port and the cruise industry refuse even to acknowledge, much less take responsibility for, all the externalized costs, borne along the entirety of the Alaska route. Ships that sail out of Elliott Bay don't simply become someone else's problem once they've rounded the West Point lighthouse, or crossed into Canadian or international waters. The Pacific Northwest - our communities, our marine environment, our climate, our children's future - is worse off for Alaskan mega cruises, and it's worse off at 2023 cruise numbers than at 2019.

But the Port has the power to make a tremendous difference. Seattle Cruise Control has compiled a list of actions that would begin to align your cruise operations with your mission statement, and we'd welcome the opportunity to discuss these with Port Commissioners, Executive Director, or Staff.

Reconsidering Cruise: Actions for the Port of Seattle

The mission statement of the Port of Seattle calls for the promotion of economic opportunities and quality of life in the region by advancing trade, travel, commerce, and job creation *in an equitable, accountable, and environmentally responsible manner*.

Yet over the past 20-plus years, the Port of Seattle has aggressively grown its Alaskan cruise business, in a manner that is neither equitable, nor accountable, nor environmentally responsible. Mega-cruise ships pollute our waters, endanger our health, jeopardize our climate, overwhelm destination communities and infrastructure, and exploit onboard workers.

[Seattle Cruise Control](#) calls upon the Port to take the following actions, which would align the Port's conduct with its mission statement.

1. Expand the Mission of Washington Ports to Include Environmental Concerns

We call upon the Port of Seattle to set an example for ports across the nation and around the world, by initiating a legislative update of the mission of our state's Ports. Under the antiquated 1911 state law governing Washington ports, they are tasked with promoting economic growth, industry, trade and tourism; the statute does not require them to consider any externalized costs of polluting climate, air and water.

This mandate is internally contradictory. The cascading effects of a deteriorating climate and biodiversity collapse are already threatening economic growth. These include extreme weather events, crop and infrastructure failure, increased disease and mortality, and mass migration. Washington State urgently needs to update the enabling statutes to require port districts to fully consider these externalized costs to public health and the environment when evaluating economic opportunities.

Expanding Port priorities to include sustainability and the health of our waterways, marine life, and coastline communities will increase the potential for local job creation.

2. Level with the Public Regarding Cruise

We call upon the Port of Seattle to adopt a policy and communications strategy regarding cruise that is grounded in honesty, transparency, and the best interests of the public. The economic and environmental assumptions that drive decision-making regarding cruise have too often been obscured by Port and industry public relations and greenwashing. We call for a rigorous public analysis of the true costs of cruise and the effectiveness of proposed solutions. Currently, the Port offers vague aspirations for long-term transformation of the industry, while year by year, tourism numbers, pollution, and dangerous climate impacts increase. The public needs to know precisely how the Port plans to achieve its climate goals for the ships and planes that are central to its cruise business. If the Port has no feasible plan for achieving these goals, the public needs to know this.

3. Cap Cruise Numbers

In light of cruise's multiple, well-documented harmful effects, we call upon the Port of Seattle to cap the number of 2024 season sailings and passengers at or below 2019 levels, reducing these numbers every year until the industry no longer pollutes the oceans and air and no longer emits climate-changing greenhouse gases.

4. Reduce Greenhouse Gases (GHGs)

We call upon the Port of Seattle to quantify greenhouse gases emitted by cruise ships along the entire route from Seattle to Alaska, and also to quantify the greenhouse gases that result from the flights that cruise passengers take to get to Seattle and home again. These numbers must be made public annually.

Using 2024 as a baseline, we call on the Port to reduce GHG emissions from cruise in alignment with the schedule in the proposed Clean Shipping Act of 2023:

- 20% by 2027
- 45% by 2030
- 80% by 2035
- 100% by 2040

If these reductions cannot be achieved through zero- or low-emissions fuels, then they must be achieved through a reduction in the number of sailings.

5. Work to Pass the Clean Shipping Act

We call on the Port of Seattle to devote lobbying resources to support passage of the federal Clean Shipping Act of 2023. The Act addresses the climate impacts of shipping, by requiring reductions of the greenhouse gas intensity of fuels, and also addresses shipping's health impacts on near-port communities, by requiring use of shore power. It calls for the total phase out of carbon emissions by 2040 or earlier, mandating reductions according to a series of benchmarks.

6. Expand No Discharge Zones

We call upon the Port of Seattle to work with other jurisdictions to create No Discharge Zones along the entire Alaska Cruise route. Each year, Seattle-to-Alaska cruises dump 4 billion gallons of pollutants into the ocean; the majority of this is toxic scrubber wastewater, but it also includes sewage, gray water, leaked fuel, food waste and plastic trash. While this dumping is currently banned in Washington, pollution in adjacent waters jeopardizes water quality and endangers marine life along the entire coast.

7. Institute a Comprehensive Onboard Observer Program

We call on the Port of Seattle to negotiate with tribes, communities, and agencies in Washington, British Columbia, and Alaska, as well as with national parks, for the restoration of independent onboard observers on cruise ships. This would be a program similar to Alaska's recently defunded Ocean Ranger program, but would cover the entire route. Qualified marine engineers would be charged with monitoring exhaust and discharge, waste disposal, and interactions with sea life. Violations of law would be reported to appropriate state, provincial or federal agencies for prosecution, and records made publicly available, allowing identification of egregious or repeat offenders. Like the Ocean Rangers, this program would be supported by a small ticket surcharge.

8. Reject False Solutions

We call upon the Port of Seattle to stop promoting false solutions, including liquefied natural gas (LNG), scrubbers, and net zero and carbon neutral emission goals. These practices either trade one harm for another, or they allow the original pollution to continue.

No LNG: We call on the Port to reject LNG-powered ships. LNG has been rejected as a climate solution by the [International Maritime Organization](#) (IMO), the [World Bank](#), and the [International Council on Clean Transportation](#), all of whom found under most circumstances, ships running on LNG have an even greater impact on the climate than those running on traditional marine fuels, and that the use of LNG will lock in obsolete technology and delay the necessary transition to zero-emissions fuels.

No scrubbers: We call for an end to scrubber use by 2024. Scrubbers remove sulfur pollution from the air and dump it into the ocean. Even small amounts are toxic to marine life. Until ships can run on zero-emission fuels, they must burn fuel that complies with sulfur limits set by the International Maritime Organization.

No Net-Zero, and No Carbon Neutral: We call on the Port of Seattle to replace their net zero and carbon neutral goals with zero emissions goals. *Net zero* goals allow for continued emission of greenhouse gases - no reductions required - as long as the polluting industries pay for "carbon offsets." Study after study has shown that the vast majority of offsets, even those that are "verified," do nothing to lower emissions. Similarly, *carbon neutral* goals also allow for continued emissions, as long as an equal amount of emissions are removed from the atmosphere somewhere else. This scenario depends on technology that may never be economically or technically feasible at scale, may not be equitable, and may do more harm than good.

9. Require Strong Labor Standards

We call on the Port of Seattle to stop being complicit in the appalling exploitation and inhumane treatment of workers on cruise ships. If the Port has no power to improve conditions, it needs to stop doing business with the industry.

Workers earn as little as \$2 per hour, while working ten to fourteen hour shifts, seven days a week, for seven to ten months at a time, with no sick days or time off. Lack of sleep and rest, poor nutrition and malnutrition, a high stress work environment, confined conditions, lack of access to mental health support and medical care, and no recourse for harassment and abuse, all contribute to poor physical and mental health. These conditions would not be tolerated in a local business.

The huge profits the Port makes on its cruise business are a direct result of exploitative treatment of workers.

The industry targets people from economically depressed countries to fill these lowest paid positions. This violates the Port's commitment to equity, and reflects a lack of commitment to ending past colonial practices.

10. Initiate an Equitable Transition

The mega-cruise business is incompatible with the Port of Seattle's commitment to equity and environmental stewardship. The destructive impacts of mega-cruises on people, marine life, waters, air,

and climate are enormous and fundamental to the industry's business model: cruise profits depend directly upon externalizing the costs of pollution and exploitation..

We call upon the Port of Seattle to begin discussions with tribes; federal, state and provincial governments; ports and communities along the Alaska route; unions; and tourism-dependent businesses about how to make an equitable transition away from this toxic and exploitative industry and toward a sustainable and thriving economy that works for all.