Item No.: 10c_order
Meeting Date: June 11, 2024

ORDER NO. 2024-08

AN ORDER OF THE PORT OF SEATTLE COMMISSION

…setting an accelerated timeline for all cruise ships to utilize shore power at all Port facilities by 2027.

PROPOSED
JUNE 11, 2024

INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1911 by a vote of the people as a special purpose government, the Port of Seattle's mission is 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.

The Port of Seattle's diverse lines of business include one of the nation's fastest growing airports, the homeport for the North Pacific fishing fleet, cruise operations in Alaska, a unique agreement with the Port of Tacoma for marine cargo operations known as the Northwest Seaport Alliance, as well as real estate and other Economic Development programs within King County. The importance of cruise operations to the Port's maritime division has increased significantly since the first cruise ship called on Pier 66 in 2000.

In the year 2000, the first full year in cruise, the Port had about 120,000 revenue passengers and 36 cruise calls. In 2024, the Port is anticipating 275 cruise calls, 1.7 million revenue passengers, resulting in an estimated $900 million dollars in economic impact to the region. In 2025, the Port of Seattle will welcome nearly 1.8 million revenue passengers and receive over 300 cruise calls, continuing a strong growth trend in the Seattle market. While the growth of this industry will continue to provide significant economic benefits to the region, without adoption of zero and low carbon energy alternatives it will also lead to an increase in diesel particulate matter (DPM) and greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) impacting human health and the climate.

Reducing air pollution and GHG emissions are key to achieving the Port's Century Agenda goal of being the "greenest Port in North America." Increasing cruise ships' use of shore power is essential to meet those goals because cruise ships are by far the largest source of the Port's maritime-related air and GHG scope three emissions.

Plugging into shore power can reduce diesel emissions from cruise ships at berth by 80 percent and GHG emissions at berth by 66 percent, on average, using Seattle City Light energy sourced primarily from hydropower. Shore power use over the 2023 season avoided 2,700 metric tons of GHG and 0.75 metric tons of DPM with 35 percent of all cruise calls plugging in. That's equivalent to nearly 650 passenger cars driving for a year.

In 2005 the Port of Seattle, through investments by Carnival Corporation, became the first homeport in North America to offer shore power at two berths. Carnival and other cruise brands continue to utilize those infrastructure investments, with 66 percent of cruise calls equipped to plug in. However, in 2023, only 35 percent of all cruise calls used shore power. The Port's installation this summer of shore power at Pier 66 and mobile plug in at Pier 91 will make shore power available at all three of its cruise berths by 2025, which will result in an increase in the utilization rate by all ships.

The Port of Seattle has set a goal in its Maritime Climate and Air Action Plan, to have 100 percent of homeported cruise ships utilizing shore power on every call by 2030. The Port of Seattle Commission is directing the Executive to create an enforceable mandate to accelerate this goal to 2027. This policy direction will emphasize the importance of adhering to data, achieving GHG and DPM emissions reduction, and ensuring accountability. The Order will require that only cruise ships equipped to utilize shore power will be able to be homeported at the Port of Seattle and must work to achieve 100 percent shore power utilization.

TEXT OF THE ORDER

The Executive Director shall ensure that 100 percent of all homeported cruise vessels are shore power capable and plug into shore power at the start of the 2027 cruise season, with limited exceptions such as equipment maintenance and outages.

The mechanisms for achieving an enforceable mandate of 100 percent shore power usage by 2027 shall be approved by the Commission, per the delegation of authority. The shore power requirement shall be in all new or revised long-term berthing agreements, tariffs, leases, renewals, and extensions with homeported cruise lines. The executive shall also identify, in the 2025 budget, any infrastructure improvements needed for the cruise lines to comply with the shore power requirement.

All homeported cruise vessels subject to the shore power mandate shall notify the Port of the duration of shore power usage following each ship call. If shore power is not utilized, cruise lines shall provide written explanation to the Port with the understanding that unavoidable challenges may occur. Repeated unsubstantiated explanations for failure to utilize shore power is viewed as non-compliance with the agreements and may be considered grounds for termination of the agreement.

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE ORDER

The climate crisis is impacting communities and wildlife throughout the Pacific Northwest. Communities face the impact of rising sea levels, temperatures, and are facing the health impacts of human driven emissions from industries. And many species of fish, birds, and mammals, including iconic orca and salmon populations, inhabiting the Salish sea are further imperiled due to climate change.

The requirement for cruise lines to use shore power is one way the Port of Seattle is able reduce impacts to communities and the climate. Cruise ships who use shore power not only reduce the air pollution and GHG emissions, but also reduce the need for exhaust gas cleaning systems or low sulfur fuel at-berth.

The Port of Seattle's Century Agenda goal number four is to be the greenest and most energy-efficient port in North America. Expediting the 2030 goal to have 100 percent of home port cruise ships connected on every call by 2027 aligns with this Century Agenda goal. This order will accelerate the pace as the Port reduces its largest source of maritime-related air and climate emissions.