



2023 Reimbursement Program for Participation in the Voluntary Vessel Slowdown at Haro Strait and Boundary Pass

The Vancouver Fraser Port Authority-led Enhancing Cetacean Habitat and Observation (ECHO) Program is again coordinating the implementation of a voluntary vessel slowdown in Haro Strait and Boundary Pass this summer. The slowdown aims to reduce underwater noise from large commercial vessels in areas identified by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada as key Southern Resident killer whale foraging habitat.

The voluntary slowdown could begin as early as Thursday, June 1, 2023. Marine mammal observers and hydrophones will begin monitoring the slowdown area on June 1 and, similar to past years, the slowdown will officially begin once Southern Resident killer whales are confirmed to be in the area. Participants will be notified by email once the slowdown area is activated. Once launched, the vessel slowdown will **remain active until November 30**, unless Southern Resident killer whales are not detected in the area for more than two weeks in October or November.

The recommended slowdown speeds are:

- 14.5 knots or less *through the water* for vehicle carriers, cruise ships and container vessels;
- 11 knots or less *through the water* for bulkers, tankers, ferries and government vessels.

Transport Canada (TC) recognizes that reducing vessel speeds can have cost implications for some vessel owners, operators and agents, and increased pilotage fees are one possible source of increased costs. To reduce the financial impact of participating in the expanded voluntary slowdown, TC has created a reimbursement program to cover additional pilotage costs incurred as a result of participating in the slowdown. Ships that experience slippage or excess in their pilotage times, or that require double pilotage, will be eligible.

Reimbursement program for additional pilotage fees - same simplified approach as in 2021 and 2022

Similar to 2022, a ship owner, operator or agent should indicate their intent to participate in the ECHO Program's 2023 voluntary vessel slowdown in Haro Strait and Boundary Pass when placing an order for a pilot from the Pacific Pilotage Authority (PPA). Following the end of the assignment, the pilot will confirm the vessel's participation status with the PPA.

If the vessel participated in the slowdown and additional pilotage costs were incurred as a result, these additional pilotage fees will be confirmed by the PPA and communicated directly to the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority (VFPA).

The 2023 reimbursement program will take place under the same simplified process as in 2022:

1. The ship agent and/or owner will **not** have to pay upfront the additional pilotage costs incurred as a result of participating in the slowdown;
2. If additional pilotage costs are incurred, the invoice will include those extra costs, **but be offset by a separate and equivalent credit on the invoice**. The net effect is that the agent/owner will not be responsible for paying the extra costs;
3. VFPA, on behalf of TC, will send reimbursement payments for all additional pilotage costs directly to the PPA, who will in turn pay British Columbia Coast Pilots directly.

What costs will be covered by the reimbursement?

Three types of additional pilotage costs will be covered by the reimbursement program:

1. Time slippage: This occurs when extra transit time shifts total time from a one-hour block to the next (e.g. travel time slips from 4 hr 40 min to 5 hr 05 min) resulting in costs for an additional hour of pilotage;
2. Double pilotage to avoid excess: This occurs when a vessel, which would normally transit under 8 piloting hours with one pilot, runs the risk of exceeding the 8-hour limit for the total job as a result of participation in the ECHO Program, and orders two pilots to do the job¹;
3. Excess: This occurs when a vessel unexpectedly exceeds the eight (8) piloting hour limit with only one pilot on board.

Additional pilotage costs will be covered but only if they are incurred as a result of participation in the slowdown.

How is the reimbursement amount determined?

- Using AIS data (vessel speeds combined with geofencing) for the participating vessel, PPA calculates additional costs based on the difference between the pilotage times that a participating vessel would have incurred in absence of the voluntary slowdown (speeds in areas before and after the slowdown area) and the actual pilotage time incurred during the slowdown.
- Specifically, the additional time resulting from the slowdown is calculated as follows:
 - The time in the slowdown zone is determined by subtracting the time of exit from the time of entry;
 - The PPA's AIS system will determine speeds based on sampling in three distinct areas: the area before entering the slowdown zone, the slowdown zone, and the area after exiting the slowdown area,
- The system will then determine the fastest speed and calculate how long it would have taken for the vessel to transit the slowdown zone.
- This last time is subtracted from the first time and is entered in the invoicing system.
- This amount will be calculated by the PPA. The invoice will note what those extra costs are and that they will be reimbursed directly by VFPA on behalf of Transport Canada's voluntary slowdown reimbursement program.

For additional information please contact:

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¹ In the event the job ends up coming in under 8 hours, but the second pilot is already on board the vessel, the cost of the second pilot will be covered. Where the pilot is not yet on the vessel and can still be cancelled, the cancellation fee will be covered. That said, a ship owner, operator or agent should exercise due diligence when determining whether a second pilot may be needed.