

PILOTAGE

TIME FOR REFORM

The federal government is reviewing the Pilotage Act to update how pilotage operates in Canada. The Chamber of Marine Commerce is advocating for a pilotage system for Canada that is safe, modern and competitive.



WHAT IS PILOTAGE?

Marine pilotage is a service where marine pilots take control of a vessel and navigate it through ports, straits, lakes, rivers and other waterways. In Canada, once a vessel is in a compulsory pilotage area, under law, the vessel is obligated to have a Canadian pilot to guide its transit through the area.

WHY IS REFORM NECESSARY?

Canada's pilotage regime is stuck in the 1970s and costs of pilotage services are out of control.

We're advocating for changes to pilotage that provide greater transparency, oversight and enforcement of pilotage services that make the best use of proven and modern technology.

OUR POLICY PROPOSAL

1 ALLOW FLEXIBLE LABOUR MODEL

Allow pilotage authorities the flexibility to choose the labour model that is best for their needs, through the choice of employee or corporation pilots.

2 SEPARATE REGULATION-MAKING FROM SERVICE DELIVERY IN PILOTAGE

Currently, both of these functions are held by pilotage authorities which creates challenges in objectivity, oversight and enforcement.

Transferring regulatory authority to Transport Canada will bring better governance to pilotage regulation, while allowing the pilotage authority to focus on service delivery locally.

3 CREATE A SYSTEM TO CERTIFY VESSEL MASTERS AND NAVIGATING OFFICERS TO PILOT THEIR OWN SHIPS

Canadian domestic vessels frequently make the same voyages through the same regions. Vessel masters and navigational officers often have in-depth knowledge of their own vessels and the same local knowledge and skills as licenced pilots to make safe pilotage within a given area.

To support greater flexibility for vessels, a standardized and improved certification program administered by Transport Canada should be created that promotes training and certification of a company's masters and officers to pilot their own vessels.

4 INCREASE TRANSPARENCY IN TARIFF SETTING

Pilotage costs have a long history of increasing at rates far above inflation – and often exceed the cost of an entire ship's crew.

Mandating transparency and regular reporting of costs and operational data as well as requirements to conduct reviews of administrative effectiveness would ensure that pilotage costs are cost efficient.

5 MOVE RISK ASSESSMENT AND COMPULSORY PILOTAGE REQUIREMENT POWERS TO TRANSPORT CANADA

Powers to assess navigation risk vested in pilotage authorities potentially leads to unnecessary expansion of compulsory pilotage areas, even where no compelling safety issue exists.

Transport Canada would be an objective assessor of acceptable risk through the use of risk-based assessments based on identifying, assessing and managing risks based on realistic scenarios.