

OBMP's EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S (CAPT Len Tumbarello) HELICOPTER OPS OBSERVED WITH THE **COLUMBIA RIVER BAR PILOTS (CRBP)** ON 15 APRIL 2026

Today I had the privilege of observing Columbia River Bar Pilot helicopter operations firsthand, and I wanted to share a brief summary of the experience with you.

The flight offered truly spectacular views of Astoria, the Columbia River entrance, surrounding coastal communities, and the Pacific Ocean. Seeing this region from the air provided a unique perspective of the geography, waterways, and operating environment in which Oregon pilots perform their duties every day.

Most impressive was the opportunity to witness a live pilot transfer operation. We observed the helicopter crew retrieve a pilot from a roll-on/roll-off (RORO) vessel transiting the Columbia River, then safely transport and hoist that same pilot onto another RORO vessel offshore in the Pacific Ocean. Watching this evolution in real time reinforced the extraordinary coordination, precision, and trust required between the pilots, flight crew, and vessel personnel.

The professionalism of the helicopter crew was exceptional. Their communication, discipline, safety focus, and flawless execution were evident throughout every phase of the mission. These are highly skilled professionals conducting complex operations in a demanding maritime environment, and they represented Oregon's pilotage system with distinction.

My sincere thanks to CAPT Derek Hill for coordinating this opportunity, and to the helicopter crew for their warm welcome and accommodation. Experiences like this are invaluable in helping us better understand the tools, people, and operational excellence that support safe and efficient pilotage on Oregon waters.

Attached are some photos I took during the ride to add context.





