

OBMP's EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S (CAPT Len Tumbarello) PILOT BOAT RIDE WITH THE COLUMBIA RIVER BAR PILOTS (CRBP) ON 11 FEBRUARY 2026

We departed the pier and transited approximately four miles beyond the Columbia River Sea buoy to put a CRBP pilot aboard an inbound vessel. Observing the evolution firsthand—from pier operations to open-water transit, to the boat-to-ship transfer—was an outstanding opportunity to see the professionalism, coordination, and seamanship required to safely conduct bar pilotage on one of the most challenging river entrances in the country.

My sincere thanks to Pilot Capt. Derek Hill for making the boat ride possible and for his continued openness and support. I am also grateful to Capt. Steve Ackerman for allowing me to observe both him and the pilot boat crew in action during a live transfer. Watching the crew execute their roles with precision, calm, and teamwork reinforced just how critical training, experience, and operational discipline are to safe pilotage on the Columbia River Bar.

Experiences like this are invaluable in building understanding and perspective, and I truly appreciate the willingness of the Columbia River Bar Pilots to open their doors and share their operations.

I have attached some photos I took during the ride to add context. To view a 30 sec video of the actual pilot transfer, please view the [Pilot Transfer Video on YouTube](#).













