

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS REGARDING THE HAUL OUT

I have had a number of good questions since I posted the announcement, on October 6, 2104, about the haul-out and time extension. I have listed those questions below; I am sure others have the same questions, so I wanted to post some information to hopefully help clarify a couple of things.

Question: Wouldn't it make more sense to replace the bilge strike plate while it is at the repair yard now? The cost and inconvenience would be minimal now than to mess with it next year. Since the ferry is already delayed 8-10 days there should be no reason not to fix it now.

Answer: This question is a good question; and without knowing all of the facts, it might seem like a logical solution. However, to replace that plate now will potentially add 4-6 more weeks to the project schedule. If this were planned out ahead of time, this would normally be a 2-week project. Additionally, if we replace the plate now, we will pay change order pricing (premium OT included), especially considering that the steel workers will already be very busy replacing all of our fire system piping. This is a work item that will need to be done in the dry dock as that section of the vessel is always under water. However, the dry dock we currently occupy is not available to us after Friday, Oct. 10 – it would not be possible to get this work done before then. Please keep in mind that we are not the only vessel in the shipyard; Foss has commitments to other companies as well. We would have to go back in the water and wait until another dry dock becomes available. We were already planning to haul out the vessel next year, and annually after this, to keep on top of maintenance and avoid emergency outages. If we bid the bilge strike plate replacement ahead of time we will get a significantly better price and the plate replacement can be done in a much more timely manner during all of the other regularly scheduled work items next year.

Question: Can the fire system and sea chest piping be accomplished at the SAME time the vessel is having the other work done rather than afterwards, causing the 10 day delay? Is it possible for the shipyard to work extra crews or something?

Answer: The piping *is* being done at the same time as other work – in fact, they started today. This is a BIG job – there is over 200' of piping. We *are* paying OT for extra crews to finish as soon as humanly possible.

Question: Why we didn't use a local Skagit County shipyard such as Dakota Creek?

Answer: Skagit County's procurement process is governed by the Revised Code of Washington and the Washington Administrative Code, as well as Skagit County's internal purchasing policies. These laws and policies are similarly applied in any public or governmental agency. The bid process is something that we must conduct in accordance with these regulations. As such, each year, when we go out for bid for the haul-out, Dakota Creek, Foss, Vigor, Lake Union Dry Dock, and Fairhaven Shipyard all have the opportunity to submit bids. I rarely get bids from all of the above mentioned shipyards; generally I get bids from two or three. In 2010 and 2012, Dakota Creek did not submit a bid. Maybe our timeline didn't work with their dry dock schedule. Once we open bids, we accept the bid from the lowest, responsible, responsive bidder. Foss has been the lowest, responsible, responsive bidder for the last three haul-outs.

Thank you for the excellent questions, and thank you for your patience. I can certainly understand everyone's frustration with the extension of the haul-out; I wish we weren't in this situation. Skagit County knows how vital this transportation link is; please know we are doing everything we can. The safety of the vessel, her passengers and crew is of the utmost importance to us as well as to the US Coast Guard. We need to make these repairs to the vessel so that we can continue to provide safe and reliable service on this route. I will continue to keep you posted on any updates regarding the project and the haul-out schedule.

Sincerely,

*Captain Rachel Rowe*

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