

Good afternoon, my name is Peter Schrappen and I serve as the Pacific Region Vice President for the American Waterways Operators, which is the advocate, resource, and united voice for the tugboat, towboat, and barge industry.

Our industry – which supports thousands of family-wage jobs in Washington and serves as a vital part of Washington’s supply chain as well as Alaska’s – opposes HB 1689.

The towing industry represents the safest and most sustainable mode of freight transportation compared to rail and trucks. Rail produces about 40 percent more greenhouse gases and trucks emit about 800 percent more than our segment of maritime. We are strongly committed to sustainability, and we are continuously innovating to build on our environmental advantages.

So while we are aligned with the sustainability vision driving this bill, we cannot support an approach that creates an expectation – and eventually a requirement – that our vessels plug into infrastructure that simply isn’t ready yet.

Maritime is not a monolithic industry and neither is the term “oceangoing.” There are many puzzle pieces to put together here. What works for cruise ships and their power needs does not work for car carrying vessels or oceangoing articulated tug-barge units, or ATBs.

Without adequate infrastructure in place to service ocean-going vessels, we are setting ourselves to repeat the problems of California. Just look at this 2022 headline for the New York Times, “Amid Heat Wave, California Asks Electric Vehicle Owners to Limit Charging”

Unfortunately, I have years of experience trying to understand California’s rules. Without proper stakeholder input, they have moved ahead with regulations that do not reflect best available technology, and we’d ask that Washington state not make those same unforced errors.

One challenge with California has been the definitions of oceangoing vessels called “articulated tug and barges.” We’d ask that Washington state align definitions with California so companies are not under different regulatory regimes.

Infrastructure electrification may be a worthy goal to reduce emissions that vessel operators could look at if adequate time is allowed for implementation. Almost all tugs and many barges have shore power connections, but they are not always compatible with the shore infrastructure, or support more than just hotel services on the vessel.

But the infrastructure simply isn’t there yet.

Again, while we share the same clean air goals as the prime sponsor, infeasible regulations without adequate power in place to meet the needs of the current oceangoing vessels is getting the cart before the horse.

I'm happy to answer any questions.