

Columbia River VTSA



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Special accommodations

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Columbia River Vessel Traffic Evaluation and Safety Risk Assessment

Tribes and stakeholders are invited to participate in an evaluation and assessment of vessel traffic safety and vessel traffic management on the Columbia River. In 2015, the Washington Legislature passed ESHB 1449, the Oil Transportation Safety Act. Section 11 of this act directs the Department of Ecology to conduct a vessel traffic evaluation and assessment within and near the mouth of the Columbia River in consultation with tribes and stakeholders. The Columbia River Vessel Traffic Evaluation and Safety Risk Assessment (CRVTSA), will quantitatively model and analyze vessel traffic on the lower Columbia River, west of the I-5 Bridge to evaluate and assess:

- the need for tug escorts for oil tankers, articulated tug and barges, and other towed waterborne vessels and barges carrying oil as cargo;
- best achievable protections, e.g., pilots use of LOADMAX system to gauge river water levels in ship transit planning (www.pdxmex.com/river-levels-loadmax);
- if recommended, tug capabilities to ensure tank vessels are escorted safely;
- and an analysis from the amount of oil being transferred onto vessels as a result of rail traffic.

The study will result in recommendations to the Washington Legislature for vessel traffic management and vessel traffic safety. Ecology has contracted DNV-GL to develop the vessel traffic evaluation and safety risk assessment. DNV-GL is an independent third party consultant with experience modeling vessel traffic around the world and has completed over 30 studies using similar traffic models over the last 20 years, including three on the Columbia River.

The study report may also include an informational description of vessel traffic, navigation, and safety on the commercially navigable waters of the Columbia River system east of the I-5 Bridge.

Information Request

The study team is currently identifying tribes and stakeholders who would like to participate in the study by providing and reviewing inputs to the vessel traffic model for the lower Columbia River.

Model Input/Parameter	Description
Baseline year and future years to include	The baseline represents the starting point for vessel traffic in the model. In general, studies will use the most recent data set for vessel traffic. For this study, the most recent data available is 2015. The future years selected will inform the additional projects and vessel traffic included in the model to determine potential future risks.
Vessel traffic growth rate	Should the model assume vessel traffic will increase, decrease, or remain the same over time, independent of any proposed projects?
Proposed projects to include	Which future terminal projects should be included? This will influence the number and types of vessels included in future vessel traffic.
Vessel categories	The modeling and analysis will focus on commercial vessels (e.g., bulk carriers, general cargo, tank vessels, tug/barge) on the lower Columbia River. Your input on how to categorize vessels will inform how vessels are modeled, and how results are reported.
Risk Reduction Factors	There are many existing safety practices for vessel traffic on the lower Columbia River. A key input to the study will be identifying these practices and determining how to best represent them in the model.
Environmental Data	Assumptions about how environmental factors such as tides, currents, and visibility are represented will influence vessel traffic behavior and risk in the model.
Other input	Your input is needed on other data to consider, such as navigational incident data, safety studies, market studies, and other issues and concerns that will provide context for the safety risk analysis.

Event	Date
Study start	March 2016
Tribal and stakeholder briefings	May 2016
Outreach and engagement with tribes and stakeholders	Summer 2016
Scenario workshop, finalize model inputs	October 2016
Review model results, determine potential risk mitigation strategies	Spring 2017
Preliminary Draft report	June 2017
Draft report (if funded by Washington Legislature)	December 2017
Final report (if funded by Washington Legislature)	June 2018

How to Participate

To learn more about the CRVTSA visit www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/spills/prevention/RiskAssessment.html. Please contact the study team to ask questions and provide your inputs. The team is available to meet with you in person, by phone, or by webinar.