

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 18, 2020

1:03 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Louise Stutes, Chair
Representative Matt Claman
Representative Harriet Drummond
Representative Andi Story
Representative Dave Talerico
Representative Mel Gillis

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Bryce Edgmon

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S) :

Board of Marine Pilots

Richard Harris - Juneau
Luke Hasenbank - Anchorage

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action recorded.

WITNESS REGISTER

RICHARD HARRIS, Appointee
Board of Marine Pilots
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified before the committee regarding qualifications to serve on Board of Marine Pilots

LUKE HASENBANK, Appointee
Board of Marine Pilots
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified before the committee regarding qualifications to serve on Board of Marine Pilots

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:03:41 PM](#)

CHAIR LOUISE STUTES called the House Transportation Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. Representatives Talerico, Story, Drummond, and Stutes were present at the call to order. Representatives Gillis and Claman arrived as the meeting was in progress.

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S):
Board of Marine Pilots

[1:04:49 PM](#)

CHAIR STUTES announced that the only order of business would be consideration of the governor's appointees for the Board of Marine Pilots.

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RICHARD HARRIS, Appointee, Board of Marine Pilots, let the committee know that he is up for reappointment.

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REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked Mr. Harris if he would inform the committee of a particular area within the board with which he is concerned, and also how the board's training is affected by [the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) cancellations].

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MR. HARRIS imparted to the committee that he got onto the board because of his long career history involvement with the marine environment, having worked for the largest company of log ship charters on the West Coast, as well as in aquaculture. He went on to say that he gained a great deal of experience working with ship agents and marine pilots, and he began to understand the myriad of challenges faced while sailing in waters that are not well marked.

MR. HARRIS told committee members that the experience and skill of pilots was essential to the safety of traffic, and so when the opportunity to serve on the board arose, he couldn't turn it down. He said it was a great experience to have worked with pilots all around Alaska, as well as others who are generally concerned with safety and navigation of ships. Mr. Harris added

that when looked at from an environmental as well as from a regulatory side, he would be able to bring something to the board.

MR. HARRIS then addressed Representative Story's question regarding AMHS. Training for pilots was a topic of the board meeting in January [2020], he noted. Pilots must ride a vessel for training, Mr. Harris explained; training cannot take place by sitting at a desk. The board's primary function is to issue certifications and licenses, and in Southeast Alaska, pilots ride ferries and pay a fee to the ferry system for that training opportunity.

MR. HARRIS continued by adding that pilots who have gained experience sailing [Southeast Alaska] areas use their certifications to sail very large vessels such as cruise ships and cargo vessels. Pilots go to places that most people haven't heard of, Mr. Harris added, and the ferry is a vital part of the training program for pilots. With the loss of ferry sailings, the board loses opportunities for pilots to get training in some major ports.

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REPRESENTATIVE DRUMMOND asked Mr. Harris to which seat, public or pilot, he is seeking reappointment.

[1:11:25 PM](#)

MR. HARRIS replied that he is one of the two public members on the board and is seeking reappointment to represent public interest as it relates to the licensing of pilots and the safety of navigation through Alaska's waters.

[1:11:40 PM](#)

CHAIR STUTES opened public testimony. After ascertaining there was no one who wished to testify, she closed public testimony.

[1:12:12 PM](#)

LUKE HASENBANK, Appointee, Board of Marine Pilots, told the committee that his job is to handle a variety of cargo ships in Alaska, and, through a partnership with Southeast Alaska also known as Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska (CLAA), he handles all the cruise ships that call in Alaska waters. Mr. Hasenbank let

the committee know that one of the main duties with the CLAA is dispatching marine pilots.

MR. HASENBANK informed the committee that he moved to Alaska in 2003 after completing his Master's in Business Administration and started working with "Alaska Maritime" immediately. He went on to say that throughout the last 17 years he has developed a "good working relationship" with many pilots in three different associations: the Southeast Alaska Pilots' Association, the Southwest Alaska Pilots' Association, and Alaska Marine Pilots. Mr. Hasenbank added that he has been attending Board of Marine Pilot meetings for 10 years, is on the board for the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council, and that he represents the Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee.

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REPRESENTATIVE CLAMAN asked Mr. Hasenbank whether he is applying for a seat he is currently holding or if he is a new appointment to the board.

[1:15:01 PM](#)

MR. HASENBANK replied that he is a new appointment looking to fill the spot formerly occupied by his general manager [at Alaska Maritime].

[1:15:19 PM](#)

CHAIR STUTES opened public testimony. After ascertaining there was no one who wished to testify, closed public testimony.

[1:15:42 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TALERICO asked Mr. Hasenbank for a brief description of the activities of the Cook Inlet Harbor Safety Committee.

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MR. HASENBANK replied that there is a "post-season hot wash" scheduled for early May [2020], at which one of the main topics will be winter operating guidelines, which deal with the movement of tankers, cargo ships, and tug-and-barges during winter conditions. The committee, Mr. Hasenbank explained, takes recommendations from pilots as well as from the U.S. Coast Guard to make sure everyone is transiting safely.

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REPRESENTATIVE DRUMMOND asked what "post-season hot wash" meant, and that she wondered if she had surmised correctly that it is kind of a nickname for the forum on safety.

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MR. HASENBANK confirmed that Representative Drummond was correct; it was a slang term for the post-season review of concerns, issues, and improvements to be made.

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CHAIR STUTES moved to advance the confirmation of Richard Harris and Luke Hasenbank, appointees to the Board of Marine Pilots, to the joint session for consideration. She reminded the committee that signing the reports regarding appointments to boards and commissions in no way reflects individual members' approval or disapproval of the appointees, and the nominations are merely forwarded to the full legislature for confirmation or rejection.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Transportation Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m.