

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM. I'm Jim Burke, with local news and commentary for Tuesday March 7, 2023.

\*\*\*

The Department of Natural Resources is a step closer to creating healthier, safer waterfronts after the House of Representatives passed House Bill 1378, Monday, March 6. Requested by Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary Franz, the legislation would give her agency, DNR, the authority to remove derelict structures like unused piers, unused pilings, and decrepit marinas from Washington's waterways. Prime sponsor of the bill is Representative Kristine Reeves (D-Federal Way). The bill passed out of the House with a bipartisan vote of 95 to 0. Its companion bill in the Senate, Senate Bill 5433, is expected to pass that chamber later this week.

Commissioner Franz said, "Washington's waterfronts are littered with derelict structures that impede our efforts at salmon recovery while jeopardizing the health and safety of our communities. For healthy salmon and healthy communities, it's critical that we get rid of them. We do tremendous work removing polluting creosote pilings, restoring nearshore environments, and keeping derelict vessels from damaging our vital habitat. This bill allows us to take one step further in taking deleterious and forgotten maritime structures from our waterways by letting us do more of the work we already do so well." The legislation creates a formal program that will remove large derelict structures from state-owned aquatic lands. It also allows local governments and nonprofits to use DNR's expertise to get broken-down and hazardous structures out of Washington's waterways.

The National Marine Fisheries Service last summer issued a biological opinion that emphasized the fundamental importance of nearshore habitat to salmon populations, and emphasized how much of that habitat has been lost from human-caused modifications to our shorelines. In addition to this bill granting DNR the authority to address derelict structures, the agency has funding requests to remove four large industrial sites, to fund staff to form a derelict aquatic structure program and more. Commissioner Franz said she is asking for \$19.75 million in capital funding to remove what she calls the "Filthy Four," four large derelict structures that are most threatening to habitat and public safety.

\*\*\*

Jefferson and Clallam County Public Health Officer Dr. Allison Berry gave a Public Health briefing at yesterday's Board of County Commissioners. Dr. Berry said that COVID-19 nationally and statewide is downtrending, and yet there are still over 500 deaths per day across the US due to COVID-19. 25,000 people have died in 2023 so far in the US and in 2021, COVID-19 was the third leading cause of death nationally, and the 6th leading cause of death in Jefferson County.

Jefferson County Public Health reports that 44 new cases were added in the past week, so there have been 7,099 cases of COVID-19 since the pandemic began. The two week COVID-19 case rate is still high at 274 per hundred thousand. The County estimates only 1 in 11 cases are currently being reported. One person is currently hospitalized and, unfortunately, we are reporting one death this week. The individual was in their 60s with multiple chronic conditions and not up to date on COVID-19 immunizations, bringing the total number of those who have died to 35 due to COVID-19 in Jefferson County. For all data, there is a link on the transcript for the Jefferson County Public Health Covid-19 Dashboard (<https://jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/1466/Case-Information>).

In Clallam County, Dr. Berry reported the case rate at 107 per hundred thousand, in the "moderate" category, but the case ascertainment rate is 1 in 20. There were two deaths. One patient was in their 80s with multiple underlying health conditions, and up to date on their vaccines. The other patient was in their 40s, not up to date on their vaccines, and died from a COVID-19-related stroke. Dr. Berry said COVID-19 in some patients can

cause “hyper-coagulability,” and that smokers are at the greatest risk. She emphasized that everyone, even younger adults, should get the vaccine, including the bi-valent booster.

Questions were asked about boosters and the answer is, if you’ve received the bi-valent booster, even if it was last fall, you don’t need another booster at this time. If the last booster you got was not the bi-valent booster, then by all means get the bi-valent booster. At this high transmission rate, it is strongly recommended that we all wear a high quality, well-fitting mask in public indoor settings.

\*\*\*

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon and five Monday through Friday and at noon on Saturday. You can contact us through [news@kptz.org](mailto:news@kptz.org). This is Jim Burke. Thanks for listening.