

Floyd E. Holcom Testimony for SB 678, READY THE CHIEF!

Chair Olson, Senators, thank you for allowing me to Testify on behalf of the Support of SB 678, an Emergency Funding Bill that is clearly that, an Emergency. The ability for the Salvage Chief to perform the mission cannot be done after the fact, and that is why we are here to day.

Today, SB 678 is critical to the sustainability, reliability and resiliency of our State and I believe it is more than appropriate for the expedited passage of this Bill. This Bill merges the importance of rare Volunteer Veteran experiences with Emergency Management to prepare and be ready for waterborne emergencies with a modified Oregon World War 2 Veteran Vessel that has been historically recorded to perform more successful missions than any other Oregon vessel, anywhere, and while after 70 years it is still the only vessel able to perform the disaster mission it was designed to do. No other vessel has yet to be built or capable of meeting its similar specifications, and to build one new, could well be over 200 Million Dollars. One only has to say the words "Exxon Valdez" to know one of its many environmental victories.

With the passage of this bill, the ability for the ships Mission for the Salvage Chief will be to Train and Support our citizen Volunteers with experienced Veterans and must be ready for these future disasters by receiving its required and necessary repairs and inspections.

In order for this ship, an Oregon emergency tool, to be ready, it needs to go back to the dry dock, and upgrade for the disasters of tomorrow, now.

Our Citizen's lives can not be risked by kicking this can down the road and hoping it will find funds to be there, it needs your help to help this state with the passage of this bill.

You have heard or all read the testimonies from the Economists, Doctors, Naval Engineers, Emergency Managers but what is rarely revealed as what the ship has already done for Oregon's economy and the lives it has already saved, and it will do more. In its over 60 years of being home ported in Oregon, the Salvage Chief has already averaged more than a Million Dollars a year in Economic Development to Oregon, purchasing supplies, services and feeding families and employees in the Astoria Coastal Portland and Columbia River regions. From Brookings, to Astoria, to Port of Portland, to the Dalles, to Lewiston, ID, the Salvage Chief has done it and can continue to and be ready to perform with the passage of SB 678.

The Salvage Chief Foundation now needs a small portion of that investment back so it can continue to help save lives, help save the Columbia River and Oregon Economy and provide and perform the mission it historically has performed when this or other disasters strike. It needs to be ready now.

I have volunteered to perform over 30 years of Military and combat Service, in Special Forces, Combat Service is several Countries, as well as volunteered to serve in Two National Guard Units of Washington and Oregon. I and my private companies are one of the few Oregon Certified Disabled Veteran Small Business that continue to volunteer and support our community in every aspect of volunteerism. I know the devastation of disasters, man made and made by nature.

You asked us to volunteer when the Storms destroyed the Tillamook Railroad, you asked us to Volunteer When the storms Wiped out the North Coast in Hurricane Winds that left that community devastated

for weeks. You asked us to volunteer to fight the Floods of Vernonia and jump into the forest fires of our state. In this future emergency, you won't be able to ask, as we will already be on the job.

And now I'm volunteering to help you realize we will need to do it again, not if, but when the disaster strikes the Columbia River and our state's commerce. I'm asking you for the only tool available to succeed and for you to explain to your fellow senators and representatives the importance of maintaining the Salvage Chief. We can be resilient in the emergency challenges of tomorrow.

I realize there are a lot of organizations requesting funds from this 2019 legislative session. However, there are very few requests that have already saved and invested more than 50 Million in this State, and the request for 1.9 Million to get it ready is a much worthier cause for the survival and reaction to keep our citizens alive.

For this ship and our state to be truly ready, it needs the Passage of SB 678.

Ready The Chief!

Thank you.

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