

SB 826 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Joint Committee On Transportation

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 4/29

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Appropriates \$1.9 million from the General Fund to the Oregon Department of Administrative Services for distribution to the Salvage Chief (LSM380) Foundation for the purpose of repairing and upgrading the vessel. Declares emergency, effective July 1, 2021.

NOTE - Measure has a subsequent referral to the Committee on Ways and Means.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The *Salvage Chief* (LST-380) was constructed during World War II as a shallow-draft landing craft with bow ramps; following the war it returned to the west coast and was decommissioned. It was purchased and repurposed by Portland entrepreneur Fred Devine as a heavy salvage tug capable of operating close to shore. The vessel had six winches mounted, making it capable of producing in excess of 300 tons of line pull. The vessel's capabilities kept it busy up and down the Pacific coast, including on such high-profile salvage operations as the Exxon Valdez in Alaska's Prince William Sound in 1989; the *Sansinena* at the Port of Los Angeles in 1976; and the *New Carissa*, which ran aground off the coast near Coos Bay in 1999.

After nearly 60 years of salvage work, the *Salvage Chief* was berthed off Swan Island in Portland, until it was purchased by Salvage Chief LLC and relocated to Astoria. The new owner converted the ship into a training vessel for local mariners. However, efforts are underway to reconvert the *Salvage Chief* to active duty to help with response in the event of an earthquake and/or tsunami.

Senate Bill 826 provides \$1.8 million to the Department of Administrative Services to repair, upgrade, and return the *Salvage Chief* to operation.