

April 28, 2021

SB 826

OREGON LEGISLATURE, JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

**JOHN F. BRADACH, SR., CITIZEN AND TAX PAYPER,
WRITTEN TESTIMONY, IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 826 TO FUND
RESTORATION OF MOTOR VESSEL SALVAGE CHIEF**

I am **JOHN F. BRADACH, SR.** I retired from my forty-plus year career as an industry lawyer, at the end of Year 2020. In my practice, I often dealt with matters involving commerce, heavy and marine construction and shipbuilding, in and along the Willamette and Columbia Rivers. Before law school, I worked along the Rivers, for companies, which later became known as “Riedel International, Inc.”, where my father, Fran Bradach, was in charge of Riedel’s extensive fleet of boats, barges and other marine equipment. My Dad was Project Manager, for Riedel’s significant role in the cleanup of the oil spill from the tanker, *Exxon Valdez*, in the late 1980s. The *Salvage Chief* played a role in moving the *Exxon Valdez*, from Alaska to a repair facility in San Diego.

Several weeks ago (in the wee hours of a Sunday morning), I surfed news coverage of container ship *Ever Given*, aground and wedged in the Suez Canal. I wondered, “Where is the *Salvage Chief*?” In *Chief*’s heyday, this would have been a typical job, for this special tool. My web search revealed this pending

Legislation, and prompted me to drive to Tongue Point, to tour the still-venerable Ship.

I first became aware of the *Salvage Chief*, when I was a deckhand on Art Riedel's boat *Willamette Pacific*, during the summers of 1970 and 1971. The *Chief* was moored across the causeway from us, in Astoria's East Mooring Basin. Then, it was kept in *primo* condition by its ever-ready crew. The *Salvage Chief* was World-renowned for the task it was best suited to perform, rescuing stranded ships.

The *Salvage Chief* was built by Oregon diver, Fred Devine, from a World War Two LCM (Landing Craft Mechanized). Devine outfitted it, with six huge LST (Landing Ship, Tank) winches, including two below deck, with wires to the bow, to enhance pulling leverage. Devine's genius produced a one-of-a-kind maritime resource. The *Salvage Chief* could anchor, run tow wires to a stranded ship, and muscle it off the beach (or whatever submarine obstacle had it in its clutches).

I am told, that the *Chief* was partially refurbished, in the not-too-distant Past, and is now operated by the Foundation seeking the SB 826 funding.

I found the *Salvage Chief*, moored at Tongue Point, near Astoria, where dedicated volunteers (former crew members) maintain the Ship. It is in surprisingly good condition.

I understand, that the *Chief* is being used for dockside training exercises, under arrangements with the Federal Government.

I am told, that the SB 826 funding will enhance the *Salvage Chief's* ability to range on the Columbia / Willamette River System, for disaster response, and make it available to a broader range of youth (including in Inner-City Portland), for education and training.

Completing refurbishment of the *Chief*, will also enhance **Regional Resiliency** for **the "Big One" Earthquake**, expected **Any Day Now**, by **Many**. If a **Major Earthquake** drops one or more of the major bridges on the Columbia River (or Willamette River, for that matter), a renewed *Salvage Chief* could quickly respond. Coordinating with diving teams, it could expeditiously cut and remove obstructions to the **TRADE LIFELINE**, that is the Columbia River.

SB 826's funding is **Cheap Insurance**, to retain the *Salvage Chief's* **Disaster Response Capability**, for the benefit of the **PEOPLE OF OREGON**.

The *Salvage Chief* is also a **Cultural Treasure**, which should not be allowed to further deteriorate, or be scrapped.

That's all I have to say, about that. (At least, for Today).

I support the Bill. Please pass Senate Bill 826.

SUBMITTED, this 28th Day of April 28, 2021, to the Oregon Legislature's
Joint Transportation Committee.



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