

SB 200 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs

Action Date: 03/14/23

Action: Do pass with amendments. Refer to Ways and Means by prior reference. (Printed A-Eng).

Vote: 4-0-1-0

Yeas: 4 - Linthicum, Manning Jr, Thatcher, Woods

Exc: 1 - Gorsek

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 2/21, 3/14

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Appropriates \$3 million from the General Fund to the Oregon Department of Administrative Services for distribution to the *Salvage Chief* (LSM380) Foundation for repairs and upgrades to the vessel. Declares emergency, effective July 1, 2023.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- History of the *Salvage Chief*
- One of few vessels with its capabilities
- Improvements planned if funding is made available

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Increases General Fund allocation from \$1.9 million to \$3 million.

BACKGROUND:

The *Salvage Chief* (LSM380) 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 Oregon 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 200 A provides \$3 million from the General Fund to the Department of Administrative Services to repair, upgrade, and return the *Salvage Chief* to operation.