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April 29, 2021

Joint Committee on Transportation  
900 Court Street, NE  
Room 453  
Salem, OR 97301

Co-Chairs Beyer, McLain and members of the committee;

The City of St. Helens strongly supports SB 826 funding the repairs and upgrades required to return the M/V Salvage Chief to operations. This is an investment in our regional resiliency and the Salvage Chief will be a key asset in recovery from the Cascadia Subduction Zone Earthquake. The capabilities provided by this unique vessel for marine response and recovery on the Lower Columbia River will be critically important to clear the navigation channel for delivery of critical supplies, while providing clean water, fuel and a floating emergency trauma center.

For our community, having this vessel operational will provide a great deal of comfort, we do not have a hospital or trauma center in our county and our communities have one highway, US 30, that provides any connectivity to the resources of the Portland metro area or Astoria. Our communities will be cut off from assistance, drinking water, fuel or any emergency supplies. In the Cascadia event, the Lewis and Clark bridge from Rainier to Longview, WA will likely collapse halting river traffic and, more critically, blocking relief supplies from reaching this entire section of the Lower Columbia River.

The capabilities of the M/V Salvage Chief cannot be otherwise duplicated by any existing assets that we are aware of and building a vessel with similar capability will cost many millions of dollars more than the \$1.9 million requested for upgrades to the Salvage Chief. We encourage your support for this critically needed response and recovery capability along the Columbia River.

We appreciate your favorable consideration of SB826.

Sincerely,

John Walsh  
City Administrator