



## Metro | *Making a great place*

April 26, 2012

Commander  
United States Coast Guard  
Sector Columbia River  
2185 SE 12th Place  
Warrenton, OR 97146

RE: Derelict Vessel at M. James Gleason Memorial Boat Ramp

Dear Captain Jones:

As you know, on March 22, 2012, at approximately 10:30 p.m., a derelict floating home with the identifying name "Vancouver Yacht Club" was reported adrift on the Columbia River from its mooring on the northeast side of Ackerman Island in Washington. USCG Sector Columbia River worked with the Tidewater Tug "Sundial" and directed they moor the floating home at Metro's M. James Gleason Memorial Boat Ramp. It has been tied to our facility since that time. This large structure measures approximately 65'x65' with substantial superstructure and draft, which creates unacceptable drag on the facility pilings, impedes recreational boater safety, serves as an attractive nuisance, and places Metro in violation of the terms of the state and federal grants used to build our facility.

The M. James Gleason Memorial Boat ramp is a public boat launch on the Columbia River, minutes from downtown Portland. Recently upgraded amenities include a debris deflection wall, extra launch lanes, boarding docks, river maps and a river patrol office. The new dock and a portion of the wave attenuation wall was constructed in partnership with Metro, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Oregon State Marine Board during the 2007-09 biennium for approximately \$2.2 million. This sizeable investment included more than \$933,000 in federal grant funding. The purpose of the facility is to provide safe, short-term recreational boat transient tie-up space and a marine sewage disposal system for boaters cruising the Columbia River.

The Oregon State Marine Board has advised Metro that they have reviewed the grant file, terms and conditions of the federal funding and structural calculations prepared by the design engineer for the transient tie-up facility. They have found many areas of concern as a result of this derelict vessel being tied to the facility. The biggest concern presently is that the vessel far exceeds the engineered load limits of the Metro facility and thus continues to jeopardize its integrity. It is very important that you and others understand that Metro did not authorize the derelict home to be tied to our dock. At no point were we contacted or consulted, and in fact we were not informed of the Coast Guard's decision to moor it at our facility until mid day on March 23, 2012.

Because of the USCG's placement of the floating home at our facility, Metro is now in default of the terms of the federal and state grants that paid for the facility. The derelict home has resulted in loss of public use and continues to cause unsafe boating conditions for users of the facility, who would otherwise utilize the transient tie-up. More importantly, the floating home exceeds the engineered load

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limits of the dock and pilings, jeopardizing the integrity of the mooring facility, and presenting a threat to public safety that Metro is presently prohibited from correcting under state law. The USCG's short-term solution to moor this at Metro's M. James Gleason Memorial Boat Ramp will create much bigger problems in the longer term.

We have participated in the Coast Guard-led "Derelict Vessel Task Force" conference calls since this was placed at our facility, but have diminishing confidence that those involved have either the authority or direction to materially affect the present state of the derelict vessel. As we enter into our busy boating season we can wait no longer. We understand that through a Captain of the Port Order the Coast Guard will ultimately approve a towing and moorage plan for the derelict barge. However, missing is any commitment to fund removal. As the Columbia River rises with a spring freshet and boaters prepare to enjoy the water, it is imperative that we understand the USCG's intended actions to remove the derelict vessel immediately to avoid damaging the facility, generating costly short and long-term repairs, creating unsafe boating conditions, and instigating lengthy permitting processes.

Please let us know what actions you intend to take and when you will take them. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Paul Slyman, Director  
Metro Parks and Environmental Services

PS: gbc

cc: USCG District 13 Commander  
Oregon State Marine Board  
Multnomah County Sheriff's Office  
Office of Metro Attorney

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