

June 12, 2024

Admiral Linda Fagan
Commandant
U.S. Coast Guard
2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. SE
Washington, D.C. 20593-7000

RE: Support for U.S. Coast Guard's Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund Special Application for Vessel Destruction of the Chaleur

Dear Admiral Fagan,

I write today in support of the U.S. Coast Guard's Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund special application for vessel destruction of the Chaleur. This derelict vessel, the Chaleur, is continuing to discharge petroleum products into the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta threatening the safety of the waterways and nearby water intake pumps.

As you know, in September 2019, the abandoned Chaleur partially sank and began to discharge the up to 2,500 gallons of petroleum products on the vessel. Given its derelict status, the U.S. Coast Guard issued a Notice of Federal Assumption and removed 2,000 gallons of oily water mixture from the Delta. In September 2021, the Chaleur was continuing to discharge pollution products into the waterways creating a new, visible sheen surrounding the vessel. The U.S. Coast Guard responded by flushing out the vessel and containing the oil sheen. However, the vessel is still leaking oil in the Delta due to the region's extreme heat causing the vessel's wooden hull to expand. This vessel must be removed to protect the Delta's ecosystem and waterways from this harmful pollution.

In addition, the placement of the Chaleur next to another sinking vessel, the M/V Aurora, has complicated the ability for Unified Command agencies to remove the M/V Aurora for final disposal and salvage. The urgency for granting this special application for the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund to remove the Chaleur cannot be overstated. Without this federal funding, oil will continue to flow into the Delta, pose a safety risk to drinking water, and two derelict vessels will be in a position to sink again. I urge the U.S. Coast Guard to approve this special application for the safety and public health of Delta communities.

Thank you for your full and fair consideration of the U.S. Coast Guard's Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund special application for vessel destruction of the Chaleur.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Josh Harder". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Josh Harder
Member of Congress