

# Helena Star Quick Facts

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**Length:** 169 feet

**Gross Tonnage:** 798 gross tons

**Former names:** Fraternite, Violette Erica

**Age:** Built in the mid 1940s-

**History:** This Vessel came to Seattle in 1978 after it was seized during a large, at-sea marijuana bust. It remained moored in Seattle until 2011 when new owners purchased it and moved it to Tacoma.

## Helena Star Q&A

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**Q. How is the operation to remove the *Helena Star* being paid for?**

**A.** Funding comes from two main sources:

- The federal **Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund** will be used to pay to raise the vessel and remove any pollution threat. Many factors are still being assessed, including the condition of the vessel, so it's too soon to say how much this portion of the operation will cost.
- A special, **one-time legislative appropriation to the Derelict Vessel Removal Program** will help fund the towing, dismantling, recycling and disposal of the vessel. It's too early to give a cost estimate for this part of the operation because there are so many unknowns. For example, the condition of the vessel will be a factor in determining how much it will take to tow it safely. Another large, unknown expense will be the abatement of any hazardous materials such as lead, asbestos and / or PCBs. However, it is safe to say costs will be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. The 2013 legislative appropriation of \$4.5 million is for the disposal of the *Helena Star*, *Golden West* and other larger derelict and abandoned vessels in the state.

**Q. How long will it take before the vessel is towed out of the Hylebos Waterway?**

**A.** It's always difficult to predict the time frame for such incidents, as each incident has its own unique factors. The agencies need to assess the degree of damage to the ship and attempt to patch any holes, cracks or openings so that it may be safely towed to the contract shipyard in Seattle. In addition, any oil or contaminants on the outside of the vessel needs to be cleaned off so that it does not pollute the waters of Puget Sound during its trip to Seattle. We anticipate the patching and cleaning may take at least a few days to complete.

**Q. Where will the vessel be towed?**

**A.** Global Diving & Salvage will tow the vessel to Stabbert Yacht and Ship in Seattle. The yard is located in Salmon Bay, just east and north of the Ballard Locks.

**Q. What will happen to the vessel once it arrives?**

**A.** Stabbert will place the vessel in its dry dock facility where it will be assessed for any hazardous materials, such as asbestos, lead and PCBs. Hazardous materials will be removed, then the vessel will be dismantled, recycled and disposed of.

**Q. What steps are planned to protect the environment during the operation?**

**A.** Many steps are being taken, including:

- Spill response equipment is staged for rapid deployment.
- The hull of the vessel will be cleaned of silt after raising and before moving.
- Remaining fuel or hazardous materials that can be recovered will be collected for proper disposal.

**Q. Why is it important to address this vessel sinking?**

**A.** Spills have the potential to adversely impact Puget Sound, which so many people are working hard to restore, protect and preserve. The Hylebos Waterway is part of the larger Commencement Bay Superfund site. In addition, The Hylebos Waterway leads to Commencement Bay in Puget Sound and is fed by Hylebos Creek, which has Chinook, pink, coho and chum salmon runs and is a habitat for other aquatic and bird species.

**Q. How big a problem are derelict and abandoned vessels in Washington State?**

**A.** These vessels pose a serious threat to public safety and the environmental health of marine and freshwater ecosystems and their inhabitants. Through deliberate action or negligence, they can break up, sink or block navigation channels. They may also contain hazardous substances. Addressing these vessels before they become emergencies will help prevent environmental damage, improve navigational safety, and save costs to taxpayers who often bear the financial brunt.