

PRESS RELEASE FRIDAY 5th FEB, 2010

VOGETRADER GROUNDING NEAR BARBERS POINT OAHU

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U. S. Coast Gard reports as follows:

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UPDATE: U.S. Coast Guard monitoring comprehensive repair plan after grounded Barbers Point vessel pulled free; no pollution reported

HONOLULU -- Marine casualty investigators from the U.S. Coast Guard continue to monitor the situation of a 734-foot bulk carrier which ran aground in the entrance channel of Kalaeloa Barbers Point Harbor on Oahu, Friday, Feb. 5.

The vessel was pulled free by tugs at approximately 2:50 p.m. this afternoon. Coast Guard pollution investigators report no discharge of oil.

The Liberian-flagged Voge Trader ran aground at 7:25 a.m. near Buoy No. 2 in the harbor's entrance. The cause of the grounding is under investigation and personnel with the state's Department of Land and Natural Resources personnel will determine whether reef in the area was damaged.

The vessel's owners closely coordinated with the Coast Guard on an operational plan that involved lightening the vessel. The responders loaded ballast on the port side of the Voge Trader in order to raise the starboard side enough to allow the vessel to be pulled free. Oil spill resources were ready to be deployed during the evolution.

Coast Guard responders reported a crack at the bottom of the hull amidships where there is a double bottom fuel tank and reported water intrusion to the fuel tank. There was no leaking of fuel, however, as sea water intrusion prevented oil from leaving the tank.

The vessel will be towed to an anchorage where temporary repairs will be made through a patch placed over the crack. An air crew aboard an HH-65 Dolphin helicopter from Air Station Barbers Point will monitor the evolution this afternoon to determine no fuel is discharged.

The grounding did not seriously disrupt maritime commerce, according to Cmdr. Bob McFarland, the senior Coast Guard officer responsible for response support.

"We are extremely fortunate to have mitigated the pollution threat to this point," said McFarland, the Acting U.S. Coast Guard Captain of the Port, Honolulu. "Through the excellent coordinated efforts of the State of Hawaii, contracted salvage experts and the Voge Trader's owners, we were able to avoid a potentially serious situation. The Coast Guard is extremely pleased with the professional response to this situation and will conduct a thorough investigation to determine what went wrong."

A harbor pilot was on board the Voge Trader, which was inbound when it went aground. The harbor pilot was taken to Queen's Hospital in Honolulu for drug and alcohol testing, which is standard in a Coast Guard investigation.
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For additional info please refer to press@vogemann.de