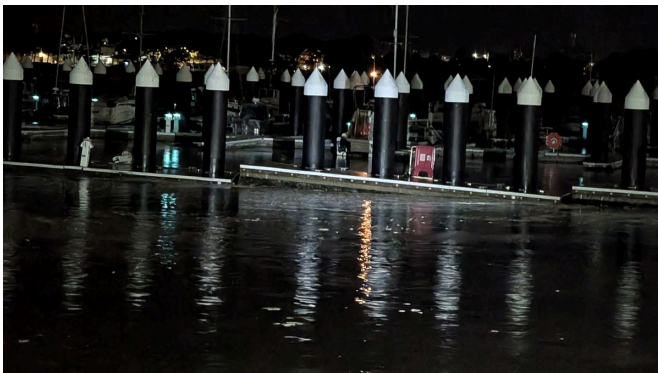


After the Wave, Harbor Commission Confronts Tsunami Toll

August 12, 2025



Word to the World: “The Crescent City Harbor is Resilient”

In last week’s Triplicate, I erred in writing Crescent City Dodged a Tsunami Bullet. The damage wrought to the Harbor was profound.

The Triplicate sat down with Harbormaster Mike Rademaker for a cogent update on this tsunamis’ impact on the Crescent City Harbor.

“The tsunami was not the towering wave you have envisioned. There were no boats capsized, no decks washed out to sea. To many who passed by the Crescent City Harbor July 30 Tsunami surge, the scene looked tranquil, calm, intact, even-keeled; but beneath the surface, engineers and harbor officials say a

different story was unfolding. Today, the Crescent City Harbor District (CCHD) is reporting preliminary damages of nearly \$1 million and a declaration emergency is expected by the Del Norte County Board of Supervisors. That declaration door to potential state and federal disaster aid hopefully will follow.”

Rademaker continued:

“While no vessels were lost, a stark contrast to the \$50 million in damages from the 2011 Tsunami, the infrastructure-sustaining harbor operations took a serious hit. According to the CCHD, essential underwater systems were compromised, including potable water lines, fire suppression systems and intra-dock electrical utilities. Even more costly may be the tons of sediment deposited in key areas, requiring dredging. It is not dramatic or even apparent: it’s wires, pipes and silt; but it makes a difference because it makes the Harbor’s ability to service the vessels that keep the Del Norte economy working.”

The greatest impact emerged not from the first wave at 12:50 AM but with one of the surges which followed. At 2:40AM, H Dock became separated by a strong surge and broke apart. H Dock provides the mooring space for extra-large vessels. It offers hundreds of feet of open side-tie space, complete with power and water hook-ups. Its partial failure has left the Harbor without one of its most flexible berths.

One of the world’s most renowned tsunami experts, Dr. Patrick J. Lynett, professor of Coastal Engineering at University of Southern California has reviewed video footage and provided a surprising hypothesis: “The Dock was not buried by the wave. It was pulled under before wave surges struck H Dock,” stated Dr. Lynett.

The Triplicate hopes to invite an Opinion piece from Dr. Lynett in subsequent weeks.

Harbormaster Rademaker said he’s not just looking to rebuild, he’s looking to re-engineer. “Every disaster reveals a weakness. Our job is to turn that into a strength. The public expects us to learn from experience and improve and that’s exactly what we’re doing,” said Rademaker.

For a harbor so critical to fishing and maritime economy, the stakes are high, but so is the payoff.

The harbormaster closed his update with The Triplicate by stating, “The best return on investment is resilience. Crescent City won’t just survive. It will be a model to the world of what resilience looks like.”

Editorial Note: The Triplicate offers great praise and recognition to Harbormaster Michael Rademaker. The harbormaster was on site at the first surge and remained on site the entire harrowing night. His command of circumstances and knowledge of the tsunami’s impact was more than impressive. Thank you for your service, Harbormaster Mike Rademaker