

SB 795 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Sen. Taylor

Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire

Action Date: 02/25/25

Action: Do pass with amendments. (Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 5-0-0-0

Yeas: 5 - Girod, Golden, Nash, Prozanski, Taylor

Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 1/30, 2/25

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure modifies laws regarding the cleanup of abandoned or derelict vessels.

Detailed Summary:

Modifies definition of terms related to abandoned and derelict vessels. Defines "authorized agency" as a law enforcement agency, a federal agency, the State Marine Board, or any other public body. Revises the definition of marine debris to include unusable boats. Allows an authorized agency to immediately remove and dispose of marine debris without notice. Revises notice requirements. Authorizes notice to be served by electronic mail if requested by the notice recipient, if a vessel has a valid, effective certificate issued in the owner's name, as well as clearly visible identifying numbers on the vessel. Adds that the notice must inform the owner that if the vessel is seized, and any personal property inside may be destroyed or sold, then the owner could be responsible for the costs of salvage, towing, storage, and disposal. Directs the notice to also list accrued and estimated final costs. Specifies that the owner can reclaim the vessel by proving ownership and paying the costs. Details that owners may request a hearing within the timeframe specified on their notice, which must be at least 10 business days after the notice was given.

Stipulates an authorized agency can seize a vessel and dispose of any personal property if the vessel's owner is absent and noncompliant. Authorizes agency to hold a person other than the owner liable if the agency has probable cause to believe that the nonowner knowingly, intentionally, or with criminal negligence abandoned or neglected a vessel.

Creates the offense of abandoning a vessel, punishable by a maximum fine of \$2,000. Authorizes the Director of the Department of State Lands to oversee procurement of goods, services, and personnel services related to the removal of abandoned and derelict vessels.

Takes effect on the 91st day following adjournment sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Criteria used when determining if a vessel is unusable
- State costs for vessel cleanup
- Maximum charges for towing, storage, and disposal
- Documentation of abandoned and derelict vessels

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Revises definitions of terms related to abandoned and derelict vessels.

BACKGROUND:

SB 795 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Current law defines abandoned vessels as those left on state land or waterways for an extended period of time without authorization, with specific rules on how long vessels can remain in one location. Recreational vessels can stay for up to 30 consecutive days before needing to move at least five miles away for 12 months, while commercial vessels must move after 14 days. Derelict vessels are those in poor condition that may pose safety, environmental, or navigational risks. The Department of State Lands oversees a statewide program to manage abandoned and derelict vessels, with funding aimed at holding owners accountable for removal.