

SB 795 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Rep. Scharf

House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Action Date: 04/28/25

Action: Do Pass the A-Eng bill.

Vote: 8-0-1-0

Yeas: 8 - Boice, Hartman, Helm, Levy B, Marsh, McDonald, Owens, Scharf

Exc: 1 - McLain

Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 4/16, 4/28

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 (ADV).
- Revises the definition of "marine debris" to include unusable boats and allows an authorized agency to immediately remove and dispose of marine debris without notice.
- Revises notice requirements for ADVs.
- Specifies that an ADV owner can reclaim the vessel by proving ownership and paying the costs.
- Authorizes vessel owners to request a hearing within the timeframe specified on their notice, which must be at least 10 business days after the notice was given.
- Authorizes specified agencies to seize an ADV 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 non-owner 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:

- Causes leading to abandoned vessels
- Ownership of the Herb Anderson dredge
- Authority of the state to sell items of value in abandoned vessels
- Occupancy of vessels to be classified as marine debris

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

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.