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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO VESSELS.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that vessel ownership and  
2 operation come with many responsibilities and that vessels  
3 likewise pose significant threats to natural resources and to  
4 public health and safety if abandoned, neglected, or left in  
5 disrepair. The legislature recognizes that unauthorized,  
6 abandoned, grounded, and derelict vessels on state property and  
7 in the waters of the State must be removed as soon as possible  
8 to minimize the hazards posed to the public while balancing the  
9 vessel owner's right to due process.

10           Since 2002, the division of boating and ocean recreation  
11 within the department of land and natural resources has expended  
12 in excess of \$2,340,000 from the boating special fund to address  
13 unauthorized, abandoned, grounded, and derelict vessels on state  
14 property or in the waters of the State. However, under existing  
15 law, in many instances, by the time the department of land and  
16 natural resources may begin removing an unauthorized, abandoned,  
17 grounded, or derelict vessel, the condition of the vessel has



1 deteriorated, further complicating removal efforts and  
2 increasing the potential to create threats to public health,  
3 safety, and natural resources.

4 The purpose of this Act is to amend provisions regarding  
5 the designation, impoundment, and disposal of unauthorized,  
6 abandoned, grounded, and derelict vessels on state property or  
7 in the waters of the State to facilitate faster responses of  
8 these proceedings.

9 SECTION 2. Section 200-16, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
10 amended to read as follows:

11 "~~§200-16 [Mooring of unauthorized vessel in state small~~  
12 ~~boat harbors and offshore mooring areas.]~~ Unauthorized vessels;  
13 impoundment and disposal proceedings. (a) [~~No person shall~~  
14 ~~moor a vessel in a state small boat harbor or offshore mooring~~  
15 ~~area without obtaining a use permit; nor shall a person continue~~  
16 ~~to moor a vessel in any state small boat harbor or offshore~~  
17 ~~mooring area if the use permit authorizing the vessel to moor~~  
18 ~~has expired or otherwise been terminated.] A vessel moored  
19 without a valid use permit or moored with a use permit that has  
20 expired or been terminated [~~is~~] shall be deemed an unauthorized~~



1 vessel ~~[and is subject to]~~ in violation of this section[-] and  
2 shall be subject to impoundment and disposal.

3 (b) The department shall ~~[cause to be placed]~~ place upon,  
4 or as near to ~~[the]~~ an unauthorized vessel as possible, a notice  
5 to remove the vessel, which shall, at a minimum, indicate that  
6 the vessel is in violation of this section, the date and time  
7 the notice was posted, and that the vessel ~~[must]~~ shall be  
8 removed within seventy-two hours ~~[from]~~ of the time that the  
9 notice was posted[-]; provided that if the vessel is in imminent  
10 danger of breaking up on state submerged land, a shoreline, or a  
11 coral reef, the notice shall indicate that the owner shall  
12 commence effective salvage operations within twenty-four hours  
13 of the time that the notice was posted.

14 (c) An unauthorized vessel may be impounded by the  
15 department at the sole risk and expense of the owner of the  
16 vessel[7] if the vessel is not removed after the ~~[seventy two-~~  
17 ~~hour]~~ period ~~[or]~~ specified in subsection (b). Calculation of  
18 the time period shall not restart if, during that period, the  
19 vessel is ~~[removed and remoored in the harbor or mooring or~~  
20 ~~anchorage area or any other state harbor or mooring or anchorage~~  
21 ~~area without a use permit.]~~ moved anywhere in the waters of the



1 State or to any public property and remains in violation of this  
2 section. The owner of the vessel shall be solely responsible  
3 for all costs of the impoundment and the disposal of the  
4 unauthorized vessel. All owners of unauthorized vessels that  
5 are impounded by the department shall be responsible for paying  
6 impound storage fees to the department while the vessel remains  
7 impounded and until the time that the vessel is returned to the  
8 custody of a person entitled to possession. Impound storage  
9 fees shall be equal to the rate set by the department for  
10 vessels moored without a valid permit. Any proceeds [~~resulting~~  
11 ~~from~~] collected by the department in relation to the impoundment  
12 and the disposal of the unauthorized vessel shall be used first  
13 to pay for the costs of impoundment and disposal [~~and~~], then to  
14 pay for any additional costs related to the impoundment and  
15 disposal, then to pay for any outstanding mooring fees due[-] to  
16 the department from the owner, and then to the general fund. If  
17 the proceeds resulting from the impoundment and the disposal are  
18 inadequate to pay for all costs and mooring fees due, the owner  
19 of the unauthorized vessel shall remain liable for [~~the~~] paying  
20 the department any and all outstanding costs and mooring fees[-]  
21 due.



1 (d) Custody of an unauthorized vessel shall be returned to  
2 the person entitled to possession only upon payment [~~to the~~  
3 ~~department~~] in full of all fees and costs due[~~r~~] to the  
4 department and any and all fines levied by the department or a  
5 court[~~r~~] of competent jurisdiction. In addition, the  
6 department, within seventy-two hours of impoundment, shall send  
7 by certified mail, return receipt requested, a notice of  
8 impoundment to the registered or documented owner or any lien  
9 holder or operator of the impounded vessel on record with the  
10 department or the United States Coast Guard. The owner, lien  
11 holder, or operator of the impounded vessel shall have [~~ten~~]  
12 five working days after receipt of notice of impoundment of the  
13 vessel to request [~~in writing~~] an administrative hearing.  
14 [~~This~~] A request for an administrative hearing [is] under this  
15 subsection shall:

- 16 (1) Be made in writing to the department;
- 17 (2) Not be deemed delivered until the time that the  
18 department receives the written request; and
- 19 (3) Be solely for the purpose of allowing the owner, lien  
20 holder, or operator of an impounded vessel to contest



1           the basis given by the department for the impoundment  
2           of the vessel.

3    The administrative hearing [~~must~~] shall be held within five  
4    working days of [~~the department's receipt~~] delivery of the  
5    written request. The department [~~shall~~] may adopt rules  
6    pursuant to chapter 91 to implement the requirement for this  
7    post-seizure administrative hearing process.

8           (e) Any unauthorized vessel impounded under this section[~~7~~  
9    ~~which~~] that remains unclaimed for more than [~~thirty~~] ten working  
10   days by the registered or documented owner, a lien holder, or  
11   operator of record[~~7~~] may be sold by the department at public  
12   auction. If the department does not, or is unable to, sell the  
13   vessel at public auction, [~~or if its appraised value is less~~  
14   ~~than \$5,000 as determined by an independent appraiser with at~~  
15   ~~least one year of experience in the sale and purchase of~~  
16   ~~vessels,~~] the department, after giving public notice of intended  
17   disposition, if that notice was not previously included in a  
18   public auction notice, may sell the vessel by negotiation,  
19   retain and use the vessel, donate [~~it~~] the vessel to any other  
20   government agency, or dispose of [~~it~~] the vessel as junk."



1 SECTION 3. Section 200-41, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
2 amended to read as follows:

3 "~~§200-41 [Disposition of certain abandoned]~~ Abandonment of  
4 vessels. (a) No person shall abandon any vessel in the waters  
5 of the State or on any property, other than the property of the  
6 vessel owner, without the consent of the property owner.

7 [~~(a) Any~~] (b) A vessel [may be deemed] shall be presumed  
8 abandoned if [the]:

9 (1) The vessel has been moored, anchored, or otherwise  
10 left unattended in the waters of the State or on  
11 public property [~~contrary to law or rules having the~~  
12 ~~force and effect of law, or left] for more than~~  
13 seventy-two hours without a valid use permit;

14 (2) The vessel has been left unattended on private  
15 property without authorization of the owner or  
16 occupant of the property [~~if:~~

17 ~~(1) The vessel's registration certificate or marine~~  
18 ~~document has expired and the registered owner no~~  
19 ~~longer resides at the address listed in the vessel~~  
20 ~~registration or marine document records of the~~



1 ~~department or the United States Coast Guard,] for more~~

2 than seventy-two hours;

3 [+2+] (3) The last registered owner of record disclaims

4 ownership and the current owner's name or address

5 cannot be determined;

6 [~~3) The vessel identification numbers and other means of~~

7 ~~identification have been removed so as to hinder or~~

8 ~~nullify efforts to locate or identify the owner;~~

9 ~~(4) The vessel registration records of the department of~~

10 ~~land and natural resources and the marine document~~

11 ~~records of the United States Coast Guard contain no~~

12 ~~record that the vessel has ever been registered or~~

13 ~~documented and the owner's name or address cannot be~~

14 ~~determined; or]~~

15 (4) The vessel does not have a valid registration

16 certificate or United States Coast Guard documentation

17 and has been moored, anchored, or otherwise left

18 unattended in the waters of the State or on public

19 property for more than seventy-two hours; or

20 (5) The requirements of section 200-52 are met.





1        [~~(b)~~] (c) The determination of whether a vessel is  
2 abandoned on public property may be made by:

3        (1) The chairperson, or the chairperson's authorized  
4 representative, with regard to public property under  
5 the jurisdiction of the department [~~of land and~~  
6 ~~natural resources~~]; [~~or~~]

7        (2) Any other state department or agency through its  
8 director, with regard to public property within the  
9 department or agency's respective jurisdiction; or

10       (3) Any county through its mayor or the mayor's designee,  
11 or chief of police, with regard to public property  
12 within the respective county's jurisdiction; provided  
13 that the department shall provide to the respective  
14 county access to the department's vessel registration  
15 and marine document records or those of the United  
16 States Coast Guard for the purposes of this section.

17 Once a vessel is deemed abandoned[~~7~~] in the waters of the State  
18 or on public property, the appropriate official under this  
19 subsection may direct and cause the vessel to be taken into  
20 custody and disposed of pursuant to, and in the manner provided  
21 in, this [~~chapter~~] part. All owners of abandoned vessels that



1 are impounded by the department shall be responsible for paying  
2 impound fees to the department while the vessel remains  
3 impounded and until the vessel is returned to the custody of a  
4 person entitled to possession or disposed of by the department.  
5 Impound storage fees shall be equal to the rate set by the  
6 department for vessels moored without a valid permit.

7 ~~(e)~~ (d) All vessels abandoned on private property shall  
8 be the responsibility of the private property owner.

9 (e) Any person who abandons a vessel in the waters of the  
10 State or on public property shall be guilty of a petty  
11 misdemeanor and shall be fined not more than \$1,000 or  
12 imprisoned not more than thirty days, or both, for each offense.  
13 Each day of each violation shall be deemed a separate offense.  
14 All criminal fines collected pursuant to this subsection shall  
15 be deposited into the general fund in accordance with section  
16 706-643. It shall be an affirmative defense to prosecution that  
17 a vessel was abandoned during a national emergency declared by  
18 the President or Congress of the United States, or a state of  
19 emergency declared by the governor, or as otherwise approved in  
20 writing by the chairperson; provided that the defense shall be



1 valid only for the duration of the declared emergency or written  
2 approval."

3 SECTION 4. Section 200-42, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
4 amended to read as follows:

5 "**§200-42 Notice to owner.** (a) A state or county agency,  
6 upon taking custody of any vessel~~[7]~~ deemed abandoned pursuant  
7 to section 200-41, shall immediately post a written notice on  
8 the vessel and send a duplicate original by registered or  
9 certified mail, with a return receipt requested, to any owner  
10 registered with the department or documented by the United  
11 States Coast Guard or any lien holder or operator of the vessel  
12 on record with the department or the United States Coast Guard  
13 at their respective last known address on record with the  
14 department or the United States Coast Guard. The notice shall  
15 contain a brief description of the vessel, the location of  
16 custody, and the intended disposition of the vessel if not  
17 repossessed within ~~[twenty]~~ ten working days after the mailing  
18 of the notice. ~~[Such owner, lien holder, or operator, of the~~  
19 ~~vessel shall have ten days after receipt of the mailed notice to~~  
20 ~~request in writing an administrative hearing pursuant to chapter~~  
21 ~~91 from the state or county agency that took custody of the~~



1 ~~vessel. This administrative hearing is solely for the purpose~~  
2 ~~of allowing the owner, lien holder, or operator of an impounded~~  
3 ~~vessel to contest the basis given for the impoundment of the~~  
4 ~~vessel. The hearing shall be held within five working days of~~  
5 ~~the state or county agency's receipt of the written request.]~~

6 (b) The owner, lien holder, or operator of the vessel  
7 shall have five working days after receipt of notice of  
8 impoundment of the vessel to request an administrative hearing  
9 from the state or county agency that took custody of the vessel.

10 A request for administrative hearing shall:

- 11 (1) Be made in writing to the state or county agency that  
12 took custody of the vessel;  
13 (2) Not be deemed delivered until the time that the agency  
14 receives the written request; and  
15 (3) Be solely for the purpose of allowing the owner, lien  
16 holder, or operator of an impounded vessel to contest  
17 the basis given by the agency for the impoundment of  
18 the vessel.

19 The administrative hearing shall be held within five working  
20 days of delivery of the written request."



1 SECTION 5. Section 200-43, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
2 amended to read as follows:

3 **"§200-43 Public auction[-]; disposition of abandoned**  
4 **vessels.** [~~If the vessel is not repossessed within twenty days~~  
5 ~~after the mailing of the notice, the vessel shall be disposed of~~  
6 ~~by public auction, through oral tenders, or by sealed bids,~~  
7 ~~after public notice has been given at least once, provided that~~  
8 ~~the public auction shall not be held less than five days after~~  
9 ~~the notice is given. Where no bid is received, the vessel may~~  
10 ~~be sold by negotiation, disposed of as junk, or donated to any~~  
11 ~~governmental agency.] Any abandoned vessel impounded under this  
12 part that remains unclaimed by the registered or documented  
13 owner, lien holder, or operator of record for more than ten  
14 working days after mailing of the notice required by section  
15 200-42 may be sold at public auction by the state or county  
16 agency that took custody of the vessel. If the agency does not,  
17 or is unable to, sell the vessel at public auction, the agency,  
18 after giving public notice of intended disposition, may sell the  
19 vessel by negotiation, retain and use the vessel, donate the  
20 vessel to any other government agency, or dispose of the vessel  
21 as junk."~~



1 SECTION 6. Section 200-47.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
2 amended by amending subsections (b) to (g) to read as follows:

3 "(b) Solely for the purposes of removal and with no  
4 liability to the department, the department may immediately  
5 assume control of any vessel that is grounded on state submerged  
6 land, a shoreline, or a coral reef ~~[or]~~; in imminent danger of  
7 breaking up; and cannot be removed by the owner within twenty-  
8 four hours from the time the vessel [is] was grounded; provided  
9 that this subsection shall not apply [~~if~~]:

10 (1) During a national emergency declared by the President  
11 or Congress of the United States;

12 (2) During a state of emergency declared by the governor;

13 (3) If the owner or owner's representative has received  
14 notice from the department and has commenced effective  
15 salvage operations[-]; or

16 (4) If otherwise approved by the chairperson.

17 (c) ~~[Vessels]~~ Except during a national emergency declared  
18 by the President or Congress of the United States, or a state of  
19 emergency declared by the governor, or as otherwise approved in  
20 writing by the chairperson, vessels grounded on a sand beach,  
21 sandbar, or mudflat [~~and not in imminent danger of breaking up]~~



1 shall be removed by the owner or operator within seventy-two  
2 hours [~~, unless otherwise agreed to by the department~~].

3 (d) Solely for the purposes of removal and with no  
4 liability to the department, the department may immediately  
5 assume control of any vessel that is grounded on a sand beach,  
6 sandbar, or mudflat [~~and~~]; not in imminent danger of breaking up  
7 [~~that is~~]; and not removed by the owner in a manner that is  
8 reasonably safe, as determined by the department, within  
9 seventy-two hours of notification to the vessel owner or the  
10 owner's representative; provided that this subsection shall not  
11 apply [~~if~~]:

12 (1) During a national emergency declared by the President  
13 or Congress of the United States;

14 (2) During a state of emergency declared by the governor;

15 (3) If the owner or owner's representative has received  
16 notice from the department and has commenced effective  
17 salvage operations[-]; or

18 (4) If otherwise approved by the chairperson.

19 (e) Once the department assumes control [~~over the~~] of a  
20 vessel[-] pursuant to this section, the vessel shall be removed  
21 by conventional salvage methods if possible, and if not



1 possible, then by any means necessary~~[7]~~ to minimize damage to  
2 the natural resources and not become a hazard to navigation.

3 (f) All costs and expenses ~~[of]~~ related to removing the  
4 vessel and damage to state or private property shall be the sole  
5 responsibility of the vessel's owner or operator. The  
6 department may take legal action to collect any costs or  
7 expenses incurred by the department for any removal under this  
8 section. All moneys collected shall be deposited ~~[in]~~ into the  
9 boating special fund.

10 (g) Any person who renders assistance to the department  
11 when it acts pursuant to subsection (b) or (c) and any person  
12 who, in good faith and without remuneration or expectation of  
13 remuneration, renders assistance at the scene of a vessel:

- 14 (1) Grounded on state submerged land, a shoreline, or a  
15 coral reef;
- 16 (2) In imminent danger of breaking up; or
- 17 (3) Grounded on a sand beach, sandbar, or mudflat ~~[and not~~  
18 ~~in imminent danger of breaking up]~~,

19 shall not be liable for any civil damages resulting from the  
20 person's acts or omissions in providing or arranging towage or





1 other assistance, except for damages caused by the person's  
2 gross negligence or wanton acts or omissions."

3 SECTION 7. Section 200-49, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
4 amended by amending subsections (b) and (c) to read as follows:

5 "(b) The owner, lien holder, or operator of the vessel  
6 shall have [~~ten~~] five working days after the date of the public  
7 notice or receipt of the mailed notice, whichever occurs later,  
8 to request [~~in writing~~] an administrative hearing. [~~This~~] A  
9 request for an administrative hearing [~~is~~] shall be made in  
10 writing to the department, shall not be deemed delivered until  
11 the time that the department receives the writing request, and  
12 shall be solely for the purpose of allowing the owner, lien  
13 holder, or operator of [~~an~~] the impounded vessel to contest the  
14 basis given by the department for the impoundment of the vessel.  
15 The administrative hearing [~~must~~] shall be held within five  
16 working days of [~~the department's receipt~~] delivery of the  
17 written request.

18 (c) If the vessel is not repossessed within [~~twenty~~] ten  
19 working days after the date of the public notice or mailing of  
20 the notice, whichever occurs later, the vessel may be disposed  
21 of by negotiated sale except that, when two or more purchasers



1 indicate an interest in purchasing the vessel, the vessel [will]  
2 shall be sold at public auction to the highest bidder[, ~~unless~~  
3 ~~the vessel is exempt from public auction under section 200-45~~].

4 If no purchaser expresses a desire to purchase the vessel, the  
5 vessel may be destroyed or donated to any governmental agency."

6 SECTION 8. Section 200-45, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
7 repealed.

8 [~~"§200-45 When public auction not required. Public~~  
9 ~~auction shall not be required when the appraised value of any~~  
10 ~~vessel is less than \$5,000, as determined by an independent~~  
11 ~~appraiser who has at least one year of experience in the sale or~~  
12 ~~purchase of vessels. Upon that determination, after public~~  
13 ~~notice of intended disposition has been given at least once, the~~  
14 ~~state or county agency that took custody of the vessel may sell~~  
15 ~~the vessel by negotiation, dispose of it as junk, or donate the~~  
16 ~~vessel to any governmental agency." ]~~

17 SECTION 9. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed  
18 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

19 SECTION 10. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.



**Report Title:**

DLNR; Unauthorized Vessels; Grounded Vessels; Abandoned Vessels; Derelict Vessels; Vessel Impoundment; Vessel Auctions; Vessel Disposal

**Description:**

Clarifies removal processes for unauthorized vessels. Clarifies the criteria for determining whether a vessel is abandoned. Reduces the allowable time frame to claim an unauthorized vessel that is impounded by the department of land and natural resources from thirty days to ten working days. Reduces the allowable time frame to claim an abandoned vessel that is impounded by a state or county agency from twenty days to ten working days. Makes abandonment of a vessel in the waters of the State or public property a petty misdemeanor. Clarifies auction requirements regarding abandoned vessels. Allows the department of land and natural resources to charge an impound storage fee. (SD2)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

