



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Senate Vote Today Calls for Easier Clean-up of Abandoned, Decaying Boats

Some derelict vessels can be treated as marine debris under SB 795-A

SALEM, OR – Boats left abandoned on waterways will be easier for public officials to remove under legislation passed today in the Oregon Senate. The vote was 29 to 1.

SB 795-A makes key changes to legislation passed in 2023, which created a program to remove and dispose of unusable or decaying watercraft. Under current law, fully submerged and inoperable vessels have been treated the same as those in working order. Officials had to store them for at least 30 days after giving notice to the owner and had to inventory all personal property onboard.

“This program has seen great early successes, but we can’t have any delays in removing dangerous, polluting boats,” said Senator Kathleen Taylor, D – SE Portland. “The current process is far too time-consuming, and this bill removes those barriers.”

Under SB 795-A, nonworking vessels abandoned without any identifying information regarding ownership can be treated as marine debris and removed without notice. When ownership information is available on a stranded, dilapidated watercraft, officials must give two weeks’ notice before removal.

Vessel owners have rights and responsibilities under the new measure. An owner can request a hearing on the planned seizure of their boat within 10 business days of notice being given. Owners can be found responsible for the costs of salvage, towing, storage, and disposal.

The bill now advances to the Oregon House of Representatives.

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