

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 301 (Senator Salling)
Education, Energy, and the Environment

**Natural Resources - Removal and Storage of Abandoned or Sunken Vessels -
Funding**

This bill authorizes the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to use funds budgeted for the Natural Resources Police (NRP) for the removal and storage of abandoned or sunken vessels. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill does not directly affect State finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Under § 8-721 of the Natural Resources Article, DNR is authorized (1) to seize, remove, and take into custody any abandoned or sunken vessel, subject to requirements to provide certain notice to the registered owner (or last known registered owner) and each known secured party and (2) to dispose of the vessel, through public auction or otherwise, if unclaimed. The department may use its own personnel, equipment, and facilities or use other persons, equipment, and facilities for removing, preserving, or storing abandoned or sunken vessels. DNR may also delegate its authority to remove and dispose of abandoned or sunken vessels to any local jurisdiction that consents to the delegation.

The department is prohibited from using funds budgeted for NRP for the purpose of removing or storing abandoned or sunken vessels under § 8-721.

Under § 8-721, “abandoned or sunken vessel” means any vessel that:

- is left illegally or has remained without permission for more than 30 days on public property, including public marinas, docks, or boatyards;
- has remained for more than 60 days at a private marina or boatyard, or property operated by a private marina or boatyard, without the consent of the owner or person in control of the property;
- has remained for more than 30 days at a private dock or at or near waters’ edge on private property without the consent of the owner or person in control of the property;
- has remained on any other private property for more than 180 days without the consent of the owner or person in control of the property; or
- (1) has been found adrift or unattended in or upon the waters of the State; (2) is found in a condition of disrepair, presents a hazard or obstruction to the use of the waters of the State, or presents a potential health or environmental hazard; and (3) is not specified historic property.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Natural Resources; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 2, 2025
km/sdk

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