

CHAPTER 724
(House Bill 817)

AN ACT to repeal and re-enact, with amendments, Section 4P of Article 14B of the Annotated Code of Maryland (1970 Supplement), title "State Boat Act," to remove a restriction on the provisions relating to the acquisition of title to abandoned vessels.

SECTION 1. *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Maryland,* That Section 4P of Article 14B of the Annotated Code of Maryland (1970 Supplement), title "State Boat Act," be and it is hereby repealed and re-enacted, with amendments, to read as follows:

~~49P.~~ 4P.

(a) A landowner, his lessee, or his agent, subject to the provisions of this section, may acquire title of any vessel apparently abandoned on his land or the water immediately adjacent thereto. The acquisition of title divests any other person of any interest in the vessel.

(b) This section shall apply only to vessels which have been apparently abandoned for over six months [and the owner or owners are unable to be located or notified as provided for in Section 4P. (c)(1)].

(c) (1) If a vessel has a boat registration number or other means of identifying the owner thereof, the person desiring to acquire title, if possible, must secure the owner's last known address, and the lienholder, if any, appearing on the records of the Department of Chesapeake Bay Affairs. He shall notify the owner by registered letter to his last known address and the lienholder by registered letter at the address of the lienholder appearing on the records of the Department of Chesapeake Bay Affairs, that if ownership is not claimed and the vessel removed within 30 days, title to the vessel will be applied for in his name. If any vessel's owner cannot be identified or his address ascertained, or no lienholder appears on the records of the Department of Chesapeake Bay Affairs, the registered letter need not be sent.

(2) The person to acquire title shall also place a notice in a paper of general circulation published in the county or city where the vessel is located, describing the vessel, its location, any identifying number, and shall state if the vessel is not claimed and removed within 30 days after the publication date of the paper, he will apply for title to the vessel in his name.

(3) At the end of the 30-day period the person shall apply to the Department of Chesapeake Bay Affairs for a title to the vessel in his name on forms approved by the Department accompanied by the following affidavits:

(i) A statement that the vessel has been apparently abandoned for at least 6 months.

(ii) Proof that the registered letter was mailed at least 30 days before application or a detailed explanation of the unsuccessful steps taken to identify the owner and secure his address.