

House Bill 957 (COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE)

By: Representatives Petrea of the 166th, Stephens of the 164th, Sainz of the 180th, Townsend of the 179th, DeLoach of the 167th, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 7 of Title 52 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
2 registration, operation, and sale of watercraft, so as to provide for certain notice upon
3 registration of a vessel with the Department of Natural Resources; to provide for
4 performance of unattended vessel checks; to revise procedures for notice to owners of
5 abandoned vessels; to revise procedures for removal of abandoned vessels; to provide for
6 penalties for failure to remove an abandoned vessel from public waters or public property;
7 to establish a criminal violation for failure to retrieve an abandoned vessel from public waters
8 or public property after receipt of notice; to provide for an exception; to authorize restitution
9 to the Department of Natural Resources for the cost of removal, storage, and disposal of
10 abandoned vessels; to provide for definitions; to provide for related matters; to repeal
11 conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

12 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

13 **SECTION 1.**

14 Chapter 7 of Title 52 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to registration,
15 operation, and sale of watercraft, is amended in Code Section 52-7-5, relating to numbering
16 of vessels, requirements, and fees, by adding a new subsection to read as follows:

H. B. 957 (SUB)

17 "(d.1) The application for registration of vessels pursuant to this Code section shall include
18 a statement informing the applicant of the criminal consequences for failure to remove an
19 abandoned vessel from public waters of this state or public property pursuant to subsection
20 (d) of Code Section 52-7-72.1."

21 **SECTION 2.**

22 Said chapter is further amended in Code Section 52-7-70, relating to definitions relative to
23 abandoned vessels, by adding a new paragraph to read as follows:

24 "(2.1) 'Public waters' means any waters within the territorial limits of this state and the
25 marginal sea adjacent to this state and the high seas when navigated as a part of a journey
26 or ride to or from the shore of this state. Such term shall not include privately owned ponds
27 or lakes not open to the public."

28 **SECTION 3.**

29 Said chapter is further amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

30 "52-7-70.1.

31 (a) Any law enforcement officer or individual authorized by the Department of Natural
32 Resources who discovers a vessel on public property or in public waters that has been left
33 unattended shall immediately perform an unattended vessel check on such vessel, unless
34 an unattended vessel check card is displayed on such vessel indicating that such check has
35 been previously performed. For purposes of this Code section, the term 'unattended vessel
36 check' means and consists of such actions as are reasonably necessary to determine that the
37 unattended vessel does not contain an injured or incapacitated person and to determine that
38 the unattended vessel does not pose a threat to public health or safety.

39 (b) Any law enforcement officer or individual authorized by the Department of Natural
40 Resources who completes an unattended vessel check shall attach the completed
41 unattended vessel check card to the vessel. Unattended vessel check cards shall be in such

42 form and shall be attached to vessels in such manner as determined by the Department of
43 Natural Resources.

44 (c) It shall be unlawful for any person other than a law enforcement officer or individual
45 authorized by the Department of Natural Resources to attach any object purporting to be
46 an unattended vessel check card to a vessel. Any person convicted of violating this
47 subsection shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

48 (d) Within 24 hours of completing an unattended vessel check or discovering an
49 unattended vessel with an unattended vessel check card attached to such vessel by an
50 authorized individual who is not a law enforcement officer, a law enforcement officer shall
51 query the criminal justice information system to determine if the unattended vessel has
52 been entered into such system as a stolen vessel. If the unattended vessel has been reported
53 as stolen, the law enforcement officer shall notify the Department of Natural Resources and
54 the law enforcement agency that filed such report, providing the location of the vessel. The
55 law enforcement agency receiving such notification shall then notify the owner of the
56 vessel of the location of the vessel.

57 (e) Failure of a law enforcement officer or the Department of Natural Resources to comply
58 with any provision of this Code section shall not limit the remedies available to any person
59 pursuant to this article."

60 **SECTION 4.**

61 Said chapter is further amended by revising Code Section 52-7-71, relating to removal and
62 storage of vessels and procedure, as follows:

63 "52-7-71.

64 (a) Any person ~~who~~ that removes a vessel from public property or public water at the
65 request of a law enforcement officer or stores such vessel shall, if the owner of the vessel
66 is unknown, seek the identity of and address of the ~~last known registered~~ owner of such
67 vessel from the ~~law enforcement officer requesting removal of such vessel or such officer's~~

68 ~~agency~~ Department of Natural Resources within 72 hours of removal. If a person removing
69 or storing the vessel has knowledge of facts which reasonably indicate that the vessel is
70 registered or titled in a certain other state, such person shall check the vessel records of that
71 other state in the attempt to ascertain the identity of the owner of the vessel.

72 (b)(1) Any person ~~who~~ that removes a vessel from private property or private waters at
73 the request of the property owner or stores such vessel shall, if the owner of the vessel is
74 unknown, ~~notify in writing a local law enforcement agency of the location of the vessel,~~
75 ~~the vessel certificate of number, and the hull identification number, model, year, and~~
76 ~~make of the vessel, if known or if readily ascertainable, within 72 hours of the removal~~
77 ~~of such vessel and shall seek from the local law enforcement agency~~ seek the identity of
78 and address of the last known registered owner of such vessel and any information
79 indicating that such vessel is a stolen vessel from the Department of Natural Resources
80 within 72 hours of removal. If a person removing or storing the vessel has knowledge
81 of facts which reasonably indicate that the vessel is registered or titled in a certain other
82 state, such person shall check the vessel records of that other state in the attempt to
83 ascertain the identity of the owner of the vessel.

84 (2) Any person that removes a vessel pursuant to this subsection shall submit notification
85 of the removal by hand delivery, electronic transmission, or telephonic facsimile
86 transmission to the law enforcement agency with jurisdiction over the location from
87 where the vessel was removed no later than one day after submission of the request
88 required by paragraph (1) of this subsection. Within 24 hours of receipt of such
89 notification of removal of a vessel from private property, the local law enforcement
90 agency shall query the criminal justice information system to determine if such vessel has
91 been entered into the criminal justice information system as a stolen vessel. If the vessel
92 has been reported as stolen, the local law enforcement agency shall notify the law
93 enforcement agency that filed such report, providing the name and address of the person
94 who submitted the notice of removal. The law enforcement agency receiving such

95 notification shall then notify the person who filed the police report for the stolen vessel
96 of the location of such vessel and the contact information for the person that removed the
97 vessel.

98 (c) The Department of Natural Resources may charge a fee of no more than \$2.00 for any
99 information requested pursuant to this Code section. Such department shall furnish the
100 requested owner information no later than five days from the date the request was received.
101 ~~If any vessel removed under conditions set forth in subsection (a) or (b) of this Code~~
102 ~~section is determined to be a stolen vessel, the local law enforcement officer or agency~~
103 ~~shall notify the Georgia Crime Information Center and the owner, if known, of the location~~
104 ~~of such vessel within 72 hours after receiving notice that such vessel is a stolen vessel.~~

105 (d) If any vessel removed under conditions set forth in subsection (a) or (b) of this Code
106 section is determined not to be a stolen vessel or is not a vessel being repaired by a repair
107 facility or is not being stored by an insurance company providing insurance to cover
108 damages to the vessel, the person removing or storing such vessel shall, ~~within seven~~
109 ~~calendar days of the day such vessel was removed, notify the owner, if known, by:~~

110 (1) By certified or registered mail or statutory overnight delivery within seven calendar
111 days of removal, notify the owner of the location of such vessel, the fees connected with
112 removal and storage of such vessel, and the fact that such vessel will be deemed
113 abandoned under this article unless the owner redeems such vessel within 30 days of the
114 date such vessel was removed of its removal, the fact that the person removing or storing
115 the vessel has the right to petition the court to foreclose a lien for all amounts owed, and
116 the fact that a court may order the sale of the vessel to satisfy such debt; or

117 (2) By advertisement in a newspaper of general circulation in the county from where the
118 vessel was removed or, if there is no newspaper in such county, at the county courthouse
119 in such place where other public notices are posted, when an owner cannot be
120 ascertained. Such advertisement shall run in the newspaper once a week for two
121 consecutive weeks or shall remain posted at the courthouse for two consecutive weeks.

122 The advertisement shall contain a complete description of the vessel, its certificate of
123 number and hull identification number, the location from where such vessel was initially
124 removed, the present location of such vessel, the fact that if such vessel is not redeemed
125 within 30 days of its removal such vessel shall be deemed abandoned, the fact that the
126 person removing or storing the vessel has the right to petition the court to foreclose a lien
127 for all amounts owed, and the fact that a court may order the sale of the vessel to satisfy
128 such debt.

129 (e) If ~~the person identified as the~~ an owner fails to redeem such vessel as described in
130 subsection (d) of this Code section, or if a vessel being repaired by a repair facility or being
131 stored by an insurance company providing insurance to cover damages to the vessel
132 becomes abandoned, the person removing or storing such vessel shall, within seven
133 calendar days of the day such vessel became an abandoned vessel, give notice in writing,
134 by sworn statement, to the Department of Natural Resources stating the vessel certificate
135 of number, the hull identification number, the fact that such vessel is an abandoned vessel,
136 the model, year, and make of the vessel, if known or if readily ascertainable, the date the
137 vessel became an abandoned vessel, the date the vessel was removed, and the present
138 location of such vessel and requesting the name and address of all owners, ~~lessors, lessees,~~
139 ~~security interest holders, and lienholders~~ of such vessel. ~~If a person removing or storing~~
140 ~~the vessel has knowledge of facts which reasonably indicate that the vessel is registered or~~
141 ~~titled in a certain other state, such person shall check the vessel records of that other state~~
142 ~~in the attempt to ascertain the identity of the owner of the vessel.~~

143 ~~(e.1)(f)(1)(A)~~ Upon notice to the Department of Natural Resources as described in
144 subsection (e) of this Code section, then the commissioner may revoke, suspend, deny,
145 or refuse to renew any vessel certificate of number or commercial fishing boat license
146 required by this title or Title 27 which is held by or has been applied for by the ~~person~~
147 owner who holds the current registration for such vessel, until all fees connected with
148 removal and storage of the vessel have been paid and any lien acquired under Code

149 Section 52-7-73 for such fees has been satisfied. Such owner ~~The person~~ shall be
150 notified of the proposed order for revocation, suspension, denial, or nonrenewal
151 personally or by a letter sent by certified mail or statutory overnight delivery to the
152 name and address indicated on the application for the certificate of number or license,
153 or both. The proposed order for revocation, suspension, denial, or nonrenewal shall
154 become final 30 days after issuance if not appealed as provided in this paragraph.

155 (B) Any person whose vessel certificate of number or commercial fishing boat license
156 is proposed for revocation, suspension, denial, or nonrenewal under this paragraph shall
157 have the right to enter an appeal in the superior court of the county of his or her
158 residence or in the Superior Court of Fulton County. Such appeal shall name the
159 commissioner as defendant and ~~must~~ shall be filed within 30 days from the date the
160 notice of the proposed order was sent. The person filing the appeal shall neither be
161 required to post any bond nor to pay the costs in advance. If the person so desires, the
162 appeal may be heard by the judge at term or in chambers or by a jury at the first term.
163 The hearing on the appeal shall be de novo, but no appeal shall act as a supersedeas of
164 any orders or acts of the department.

165 (2)(A) Upon notice to the Department of Natural Resources as described in
166 subsection (e) of this Code section and delivery of a copy of such notice to the state
167 revenue commissioner, then the state revenue commissioner may revoke, suspend,
168 deny, or refuse to renew any motor vehicle registration required by Title 40 which is
169 held by or has been applied for by the person owner who holds the current registration
170 for such vessel, until all fees connected with removal and storage of the vessel have
171 been paid and any lien acquired under Code Section 52-7-73 for such fees has been
172 satisfied. Such owner ~~The person~~ shall be notified of the proposed order for revocation,
173 suspension, denial, or nonrenewal personally or by a letter sent by certified mail or
174 statutory overnight delivery to the name and address indicated on the application for the

175 registration. The proposed order for revocation, suspension, denial, or nonrenewal shall
176 become final 30 days after issuance if not appealed as provided in this paragraph.

177 (B) Any person whose motor vehicle registration is proposed for revocation,
178 suspension, denial, or nonrenewal under this paragraph shall have the right to enter an
179 appeal in the superior court of the county of his or her residence or in the Superior
180 Court of Fulton County. Such appeal shall name the state revenue commissioner as
181 defendant and ~~must~~ shall be filed within 30 days from the date the notice of the
182 proposed order was sent. The person filing the appeal shall neither be required to post
183 any bond nor to pay the costs in advance. If the person so desires, the appeal may be
184 heard by the judge at term or in chambers or by a jury at the first term. The hearing on
185 the appeal shall be de novo, but no appeal shall act as a supersedeas of any orders or
186 acts of the department.

187 ~~(f) Upon ascertaining the owner of such vessel, the person removing or storing such vessel~~
188 ~~shall, within five calendar days, by certified or registered mail or statutory overnight~~
189 ~~delivery, notify the owner, lessors, lessees, security interest holders, and lienholders of the~~
190 ~~vessel of the location of such vessel and of the fact that such vessel is deemed abandoned~~
191 ~~and shall be disposed of if not redeemed.~~

192 ~~(g) If the identity of the owner of such vessel cannot be ascertained, the person removing~~
193 ~~or storing such vessel shall place an advertisement in a newspaper of general circulation~~
194 ~~in the county where such vessel was obtained or, if there is no newspaper in such county,~~
195 ~~shall post such advertisement at the county courthouse in such place where other public~~
196 ~~notices are posted. Such advertisement shall run in the newspaper once a week for two~~
197 ~~consecutive weeks or shall remain posted at the courthouse for two consecutive weeks.~~
198 ~~The advertisement shall contain a complete description of the vessel, its certificate of~~
199 ~~number and hull identification number, the location from where such vessel was initially~~
200 ~~removed, the present location of such vessel, and the fact that such vessel is deemed~~
201 ~~abandoned and shall be disposed of if not redeemed.~~

202 ~~(h) Reserved.~~

203 ~~(i)(g)~~ Any person storing a vessel under the provisions of this Code section shall notify the
 204 Department of Natural Resources if the vessel is recovered, is claimed by the owner, is
 205 determined to be stolen, or is for any reason no longer an abandoned vessel. Such notice
 206 shall be provided within seven calendar days of such event.

207 ~~(j)(h)~~ If vessel information on the abandoned vessel is not in the files of the Department
 208 of Natural Resources, the department may require such other information or confirmation
 209 as it determines is necessary or appropriate to determine the identity of the vessel.

210 ~~(k)(i)~~ Any person who does not provide the notice and information required by this Code
 211 section shall not be entitled to any storage fees.

212 ~~(l)(j)~~ Any person who knowingly provides false or misleading information when providing
 213 any notice or information as required by this Code section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor
 214 and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished as for a misdemeanor."

215

SECTION 5.

216 Said chapter is further amended by revising Code Section 52-7-72, relating to authority of
 217 peace officer to cause removal of unattended vessels, notifications, and duties, as follows:

218 "52-7-72.

219 (a) Any ~~peace~~ law enforcement officer who finds a vessel which has been left unattended
 220 in or upon any public waters or other public property for a period of at least five days, if
 221 ~~such peace officer reasonably believes that the person who left such vessel unattended does~~
 222 ~~not intend to return and remove such vessel, shall notify the Department of Natural~~
 223 ~~Resources of such finding in accordance with subsection (d) of this Code section and as~~
 224 evidenced by the date of issuance on the unattended vessel check card attached to such
 225 vessel pursuant to Code Section 52-7-70.1, may cause such vessel to be removed to a
 226 garage or other place of safety.

227 (b)(1) Any ~~peace~~ law enforcement officer who finds a vessel which has been left
228 unattended in or upon any public waters or other public property, when such vessel poses
229 a threat to public health or safety, ~~shall notify the Department of Natural Resources of~~
230 ~~such finding in accordance with subsection (d) of this Code section and~~ may immediately
231 cause such vessel to be removed to a garage or other place of safety.

232 (2) Within 24 hours of causing an unattended vessel to be removed pursuant to
233 paragraph (1) of this subsection, the law enforcement officer causing such removal shall
234 query the criminal justice information system to determine if the unattended vessel has
235 been entered into the criminal justice information system as a stolen vessel. If the
236 removed vessel has been reported as stolen, the law enforcement officer shall notify the
237 law enforcement agency that filed such report, providing the location of the vessel or the
238 name of the person that removed the vessel. The law enforcement agency receiving such
239 notification shall then notify the person who filed the police report for the stolen vessel
240 of the location of the vessel.

241 (c) Any ~~peace~~ law enforcement officer who, under the provisions of this Code section,
242 causes any vessel to be removed to a garage or other place of safety shall be liable for gross
243 negligence only.

244 (d)(1) Any ~~peace~~ law enforcement officer who finds a vessel under such conditions as
245 described in subsection (a) or (b) of this Code section shall within 72 hours from the time
246 of such finding:

247 (A) ~~Notify~~ notify the Department of Natural Resources of the description of the vessel,
248 whether the vessel has been removed or not, and, if removed, the location to which such
249 vessel has been removed; ~~and,~~

250 (B) ~~If available on the Georgia Crime Information Center Network, determine the~~
251 ~~name and address of the last known registered owner of such vessel. If vessel~~
252 ~~information is not in the files of the Department of Natural Resources, the department~~

253 may require such other information or confirmation as it determines is necessary or
254 appropriate to determine the identity of the vessel.

255 ~~(2) If any such vessel is determined to be a stolen vessel, the local law enforcement~~
256 ~~officer or agency shall notify the Georgia Crime Information Center and the owner, if~~
257 ~~known, of the location of such vessel within 72 hours after receiving notice that such~~
258 ~~vessel is a stolen vessel.~~

259 ~~(3) If the vessel is removed and the name and address of the last known registered owner~~
260 ~~of the vessel is obtained from the Georgia Crime Information Center, the peace officer~~
261 ~~who causes the vessel to be removed shall, within three calendar days of removal, make~~
262 ~~available to the person removing such vessel the name and address of the last known~~
263 ~~registered owner of such vessel. If such information is not available, the peace officer~~
264 ~~shall, within three calendar days of removal, notify the person removing or storing such~~
265 ~~vessel of such fact."~~

266 **SECTION 6.**

267 Said chapter is further amended by revising Code Section 52-7-72.1, relating to penalty for
268 failing to remove unattended vessel, as follows:

269 "52-7-72.1.

270 (a)(1) If any vessel for which the Department of Natural Resources ~~and the Georgia~~
271 ~~Crime Information Center have~~ has received notice pursuant to subsection (d) of Code
272 Section 52-7-72 has not been removed and is determined not to be a stolen vessel, the
273 ~~commissioner may proceed to take action against the owner as provided by provisions~~
274 of this Code section shall apply.

275 (2) If any vessel for which the Department of Natural Resources ~~and the Georgia Crime~~
276 ~~Information Center have~~ has received notice pursuant to subsection (d) of Code
277 Section 52-7-72 has been removed, the provisions of this Code section shall not apply
278 and the provisions of Code Section 52-7-71 shall apply instead.

279 (b)(1) Within seven calendar days of receipt of the notice required pursuant to subsection
280 (d) of Code Section 52-7-72 that a vessel has not been removed and has been determined
281 not be a stolen vessel, the Department of Natural Resources shall, by certified or
282 registered mail or statutory overnight delivery, notify the owner of the location of such
283 vessel and that if such vessel is not removed within 30 days the vessel will be deemed
284 abandoned under this article and:

285 (A) Shall be subject to a lien for actual or projected costs for the removal, storage, and
286 sale of such vessel;

287 (B) Failure to remove the vessel may result in the revocation, suspension, denial, or
288 refusal to renew a motor vehicle registration, vessel certificate of number, or
289 commercial fishing boat license of a vessel owner that has registered such vessel with
290 the Department of Natural Resources;

291 (C) That the owner may be liable to the department for damages for the removal,
292 storage, and disposal of the vessel; and

293 (D) Failure to remove the vessel may result in the criminal prosecution of a vessel
294 owner that has registered such vessel with the Department of Natural Resources.

295 (2) The requirement for removal of a vessel within 30 days pursuant to this subsection
296 shall be inapplicable upon declaration by the Governor of a state of emergency due to a
297 natural disaster affecting the location of the vessel.

298 ~~(b)(c)(1)(A) The commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources shall be~~
299 ~~authorized to Upon notice to the Department of Natural Resources as described in~~
300 ~~subsection (d) of Code Section 52-7-72, then the commissioner may revoke, suspend,~~
301 ~~deny, or refuse to renew any vessel certificate of number or commercial fishing boat~~
302 ~~license required by this title or Title 27 which is held by or has been applied for by a~~
303 ~~person who owns the vessel, until the owner~~ a vessel owner that has registered such
304 vessel with the Department of Natural Resources which has become abandoned that has
305 been notified in accordance with subsection (b) of this Code section, until such person

306 restores and resumes operation of the vessel or removes it from public waters or public
307 property. The person shall be notified of the proposed order for revocation, suspension,
308 denial, or nonrenewal personally or by a letter sent by certified mail or statutory
309 overnight delivery to the name and address indicated on the application for the
310 certificate of number or license, or both. The proposed order for revocation,
311 suspension, denial, or nonrenewal shall become final 30 days after issuance if not
312 appealed as provided in this paragraph.

313 (B) Any person whose vessel certificate of number or commercial fishing boat license
314 is proposed for revocation, suspension, denial, or nonrenewal under this paragraph shall
315 have the right to enter an appeal in the superior court of the county of his or her
316 residence or in the Superior Court of Fulton County. Such appeal shall name the
317 commissioner as defendant and ~~must~~ shall be filed within 30 days from the date the
318 notice of the proposed order was sent. The person filing the appeal shall neither be
319 required to post any bond nor to pay the costs in advance. If the person so desires, the
320 appeal may be heard by the judge at term or in chambers or by a jury at the first term.
321 The hearing on the appeal shall be de novo, but no appeal shall act as a supersedeas of
322 any orders or acts of the department.

323 ~~(2)(A) Upon notice to the Department of Natural Resources as described in~~
324 ~~subsection (d) of Code Section 52-7-72 and delivery of a copy of such notice to the~~
325 ~~state revenue commissioner, then the~~ The state revenue commissioner may shall be
326 authorized to revoke, suspend, deny, or refuse to renew any motor vehicle registration
327 required by Title 40 which is held by or has been applied for by ~~a person who owns the~~
328 ~~vessel, until the owner~~ a vessel owner that has registered such vessel with the
329 Department of Natural Resources which has become abandoned that has been notified
330 in accordance with subsection (b) of this Code section, until such person restores and
331 resumes operation of the vessel or removes it from public waters or public property.
332 The person shall be notified of the proposed order for revocation, suspension, denial,

333 or nonrenewal personally or by a letter sent by certified mail or statutory overnight
334 delivery to the name and address indicated on the application for the registration. The
335 proposed order for revocation, suspension, denial, or nonrenewal shall become final 30
336 days after issuance if not appealed as provided in this paragraph.

337 (B) Any person whose motor vehicle registration is proposed for revocation,
338 suspension, denial, or nonrenewal under this paragraph shall have the right to enter an
339 appeal in the superior court of the county of his or her residence or in the Superior
340 Court of Fulton County. Such appeal shall name the state revenue commissioner as
341 defendant and ~~must~~ shall be filed within 30 days from the date the notice of the
342 proposed order was sent. The person filing the appeal shall neither be required to post
343 any bond nor to pay the costs in advance. If the person so desires, the appeal may be
344 heard by the judge at term or in chambers or by a jury at the first term. The hearing on
345 the appeal shall be de novo, but no appeal shall act as a supersedeas of any orders or
346 acts of the department.

347 (d) Any vessel owner that has registered such vessel with the Department of Natural
348 Resources that fails to remove such vessel from public waters or public property within 30
349 days receipt of the notice issued pursuant to subsection (b) of this Code section shall be
350 guilty of a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature and, upon conviction thereof,
351 shall be punished by a fine not to exceed \$5,000.00 or by confinement for a term not to
352 exceed 12 months, or both; provided, however, that the requirement for removal of a vessel
353 within 30 days pursuant to this subsection shall be inapplicable upon declaration by the
354 Governor of a state of emergency due to a natural disaster affecting the location of the
355 vessel. Upon a second or subsequent offense for failure to remove an abandoned vessel
356 from public waters or public property, a vessel owner that has registered such vessel with
357 the Department of Natural Resources shall be guilty of a felony and, upon conviction
358 thereof, shall be punished by a fine not to exceed \$50,000.00 or by imprisonment for a term
359 not to exceed five years, or both. In addition to any other penalty authorized by law for

360 failure to remove an abandoned vessel from public waters or public property, the court may
361 order a person convicted pursuant to this subsection to make restitution to Department of
362 Natural Resources for the reasonable costs or damages associated with failure to remove
363 the vessel, including the cost of removal, storage, and disposal of such vessel. Restitution
364 made pursuant to this subsection shall not preclude the Department of Natural Resources
365 from obtaining any other civil or criminal remedy available under any other provision of
366 law. The restitution authorized by this Code section shall be supplemental and not
367 exclusive."

368 **SECTION 7.**

369 Said chapter is further amended in Code Section 52-7-74, relating to procedure for
370 foreclosure, by revising paragraph (2) as follows:

371 "(2) The person desiring to foreclose a lien on an abandoned vessel shall, by certified or
372 registered mail or statutory overnight delivery, make a demand upon the owner for the
373 payment of the reasonable fees for removal and storage plus the costs of any
374 advertisement. Such written demand shall include an itemized statement of all charges.
375 No such written demand shall be required if the identity of the owner cannot be
376 ascertained and the notice requirements of paragraph (2) of subsection (g) (d) of Code
377 Section 52-7-71 have been complied with;"

378 **SECTION 8.**

379 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.