**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 50‑21‑190, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO THE ABANDONMENT OF WATERCRAFT AND OUTBOARD MOTORS, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT AN ABANDONED WATERCRAFT MAY BE REMOVED AND DISPOSED OF BY ANY GOVERNMENT AGENCY THAT HAS JURISDICTION OVER THE AREA WHERE THE ABANDONED WATERCRAFT IS LOCATED, AND TO PROVIDE THAT A WATERCRAFT ABANDONED FOR AT LEAST NINETY DAYS MAY BE CLAIMED BY ANY PERSON OR ENTITY AS ABANDONED PROPERTY.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Section 50‑21‑190 of the 1976 Code, as added by Act 321 of 2008, is amended to read:

“Section 50‑21‑190. (A) It is unlawful to abandon a watercraft or outboard motor on the public lands or waters of this State or on private property without permission of the property owner. This section does not apply to persons who abandon a watercraft in an emergency for the safety of the persons onboard; however, after the emergency is over, the owner and operator of the abandoned watercraft shall make a bona fide attempt to recover the watercraft.

(B) A person violating the provisions of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined not less than one thousand dollars nor more than five thousand dollars or imprisoned up to thirty days, or both. In addition, the owner must remove the abandoned watercraft within fourteen days of conviction. The magistrates and municipal courts are vested with jurisdiction for cases arising under this section.

(C) An abandoned watercraft ~~must~~ may be removed ~~at the risk and expense of the owner~~ and disposed of by any governmental agency that has jurisdiction over the area where the abandoned watercraft is located.

(D) A watercraft abandoned for at least ninety days may be claimed by any person or entity as abandoned property.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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