



# News

## NEWS RELEASE – *for immediate release*

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January 21, 2026

### Oregon Cracking Down on Abandoned Boats *Updates from Legislature and Grant Funds Spur Action*

SALEM, Ore. – Abandoned boats continue to harm Oregon’s rivers and coastlines. From huge vessels like the 100-foot *Dredge Herb Anderson*, removed from the Columbia River last year, to smaller recreational craft, these derelict boats leak harmful toxins, drift dangerously into navigational channels, and degrade water quality.

Oregon Department of State Lands has been leading the charge on this issue since launching the statewide Abandoned and Derelict Vessel (ADV) Program in Sept 2024.

“We can’t continue polluting our Oregon waterways or risking a large marine accident,” said Kaitlin Lovell, recently appointed Director at Oregon Department of State Lands, “The scope of this issue has motivated bipartisan legislators and community members along impacted waterways to come together for solutions.”

After a successful push during the state’s 2025 legislative session, two significant changes to state law came into effect on September 26th, 2025.

- **Streamlined Disposal:** Allows the state to classify severely degraded ADVs as marine debris, opening a more efficient and cost-effective route for disposal.
- **Reduced Administrative Burden:** Allows authorized entities throughout the state to remove ADVs from the waterway without a time- and resource-intensive process, reducing delays and red tape.

“The legislative wins for this program might sound like words on a page, but these are the systematic changes we need to get these dilapidated vessels out of our waters,” said Democratic State Representative David Gomberg from Oregon District 10. In agreement was Republican State Senator Legislator Dick Anderson from Lincoln City, “This issue requires all of us to stay vigilant for ways to be more effective, and removing red tape is a good place to start.”

In addition to legislative progress, Oregon's statewide ADV Program secured a \$1,000,000 grant from the BoatUS Foundation, with support from the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Marine Debris Program](#). The dollars awarded to Oregon will support the removal and disposal of dozens of high-priority boats in counties throughout Oregon.

*“Some of the really large vessels can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars when there is toxic material,” said Aaron Bretz, Deputy Director of the Port of Newport, “so obviously significant funding is required, but there’s also a lot of coordination with the Coast Guard, sheriff’s offices, environmental regulators, and companies equipped to perform the complex dismantling work.”*

Coordination of involved parties was top-of-mind for Oregon Department of State Lands when updating the statewide ADV Program website to include new procedures for ADVs based on the changes in state law.

A remaining challenge for the nascent program is stemming the flow of ADVs into Oregon waterways.

“We pursue penalties against owners who fail to resolve their problems and leave DSL to address the hazards they’ve created,” said Josh Mulhollem, the Department’s Waterways Stewardship Program Manager. “But many of the biggest, most expensive cleanups are ships that have already drained the owner’s assets. Many people just don’t understand that bidding on a cheap ship at auction can lead to financial ruin.”

Despite the challenges that remain, momentum is building. With new tools, funding, and partnerships in place, Oregon’s ADV Program is chartering a clearer course toward cleaner, safer, waterways.

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*About Oregon’s Abandoned and Derelict Vessel Program:*

The Oregon Department of State Lands oversees the statewide ADV Program which collaborates with other state agencies as well as community and federal partners to reduce the impacts of abandoned and derelict vessels, address waterway hazards, and collaborate toward long term solutions to prevent the addition of more ADVs to Oregon-owned waters.

*About the BoatUS Foundation:*

BoatUS Foundation is supporting projects selected through their nationally competitive grant program for the removal of abandoned and derelict vessels throughout coastal and marine areas of the United States, including the Great Lakes, U.S. territories, and Freely Associated States. In an effort to help educate and prevent future ADVs, the Foundation is also creating a national ADV database to track the scope of the challenge and measure success, document ADV prevention and removal activities to share with the public and support a national dialogue and education efforts on boating-related debris disposal. This project is supported by the NOAA Marine Debris Program.