



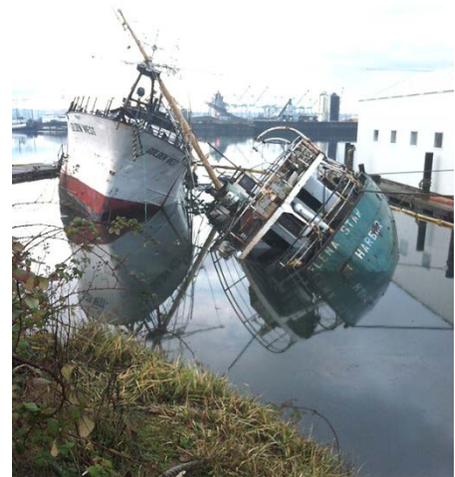
## Increase vessel owner responsibility and address challenges to removing derelict and abandoned vessels

HB 2457 (Hansen & Smith)

**Issue** Abandoned or derelict vessels pose a serious threat to the environment and to industries and the public that depend on clean water and unobstructed navigational channels. Addressing these vessels before they become emergencies will protect jobs in marine industries, prevent environmental damage, improve navigational safety, and save public tax dollars incurred from cleanup costs.

**Background** In 2013, ESHB 1245 addressed several issues relating to derelict vessels, namely:

- Vessel owner accountability.
- A pilot volunteer vessel turn-in program.
- Extended an annual surcharge for vessel registration to help fund the Derelict Vessel Removal Program, managed by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR).
- Granted boarding authority to authorized public entities and the Department of Ecology in certain situations.
- Established a workgroup to continue addressing the following: responsibilities of vessel owners and moorage facility operators, removing roadblocks to more streamlined vessel deconstruction, and funding for the removal of derelict and abandoned vessels.



The *Golden West* (left) and the *Helena Star* (right) on the Hylebos Waterway in 2013. Photo: WA Dept. of Ecology

This 2014 legislative proposal is the result of recommendations from the work group.

### **Proposal** Increase accountability for buyers and sellers of high-risk vessels

Vessels longer than 65 feet and older than 40 years present the highest risk of becoming derelict or abandoned and are the most expensive to remove. This proposal increases accountability for both buyers and sellers of these vessels by:

- Requiring the buyer of a high-risk vessel to have insurance at the time of sale or transfer.
- Prohibiting the sale or transfer of high-risk vessels for anything other than scrap or salvage, unless the vessel is repaired, if a marine survey discloses that the vessel is not seaworthy.
- Holding individuals liable if they sell vessels determined through required marine survey to be unseaworthy.

## **Expand authorities and responsibilities of moorage facilities**

This proposal codifies best practices used by many of the state's marinas by requiring both vessel owners and marinas to carry insurance for removing wrecks. The bill also expands marinas' authority to work with DNR to remove derelict vessels from their property.

## **Provide incentives to remove and deconstruct vessels**

Adopting certain financial incentives for vessel deconstruction will serve to quicken the pace that derelict and abandoned vessels can be removed from our waters.

## **Include funding from commercial vessels for the Derelict Vessel Removal Program**

Currently, all dedicated funding for the Derelict Vessel Removal Program comes from a \$3 fee on recreational vessel registrations. This proposal would include funding from commercial vessels moored in Washington waters to help address the backlog of abandoned vessels. The new funding source will also remove some of the financial burden from the recreational boating community and the general public.