

§ 413. Duty of United States attorneys and other Federal officers in enforcement of provisions; arrest of offenders

The Department of Justice shall conduct the legal proceedings necessary to enforce the provisions of sections 401, 403, 404, 406, 407, 408, 409, 411, and 412 of this title; and it shall be the duty of United States attorneys to vigorously prosecute all offenders against the same whenever requested to do so by the Secretary of the Army or by any of the officials hereinafter designated, and it shall furthermore be the duty of said United States attorneys to report to the Attorney General of the United States the action taken by him against offenders so reported, and a transcript of such reports shall be transmitted to the Secretary of the Army by the Attorney General; and for the better enforcement of the said provisions and to facilitate the detection and bringing to punishment of such offenders, the officers and agents of the United States in charge of river and harbor improvements, and the assistant engineers and inspectors employed under them by authority of the Secretary of the Army, and the United States collectors of customs and other revenue officers shall have power and authority to swear out process, and to arrest and take into custody, with or without process, any person or persons who may commit any of the acts or offenses prohibited by the said sections, or who may violate any of the provisions of the same: *Provided*, That no person shall be arrested without process for any offense not committed in the presence of some one of the aforesaid officials: *And provided further*, That whenever any arrest is made under such sections, the person so arrested shall be brought forthwith before a magistrate judge, judge, or court of the United States for examination of the offenses alleged against him; and such magistrate judge, judge, or court shall proceed in respect thereto as authorized by law in case of crimes against the United States.

(Mar. 3, 1899, ch. 425, §17, 30 Stat. 1153; July 26, 1947, ch. 343, title II, §205(a), 61 Stat. 501; June 25, 1948, ch. 646, §1, 62 Stat. 909; Pub. L. 90-578, title IV, §402(b)(2), Oct. 17, 1968, 82 Stat. 1118; Pub. L. 101-650, title III, §321, Dec. 1, 1990, 104 Stat. 5117.)

Editorial Notes

CODIFICATION

Section is from act Mar. 3, 1899, popularly known as the "Rivers and Harbors Appropriation Act of 1899".

PRIOR PROVISIONS

Act Sept. 19, 1890, ch. 907, §11, 26 Stat. 455, was probably omitted from the Code as superseded by this section, or as rendered obsolete by act March 3, 1899, different sections of which superseded provisions of the act of 1890, the enforcement of which was provided for by section 11. It read as follows: "It shall be the duty of officers and agents having the supervision, on the part of the United States, of the works in progress for the preservation and improvement of said navigable waters, and, in their absence, of the United States collectors of customs and other revenue officers to enforce the provisions of this act by giving information to the district attorney of the United States for the district in which any violation of any provision of this act shall have been committed: *Provided*, That the provisions of this act shall not apply to Torch Lake, Houghton County, Michigan."

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

CHANGE OF NAME

Act June 25, 1948, eff. Sept. 1, 1948, substituted "United States attorneys" for "district attorneys of the United States" and "district attorneys". See section 541 of Title 28, Judiciary and Judicial Procedure, and Historical and Revision Notes set out thereunder.

Department of War designated Department of the Army and title of Secretary of War changed to Secretary of the Army by section 205(a) of act July 26, 1947, ch. 343, title II, 61 Stat. 501. Section 205(a) of act July 26, 1947, was repealed by section 53 of act Aug. 10, 1956, ch. 1041, 70A Stat. 641. Section 1 of act Aug. 10, 1956, enacted "Title 10, Armed Forces" which in sections 3010 to 3013 continued Department of the Army under administrative supervision of Secretary of the Army.

"Magistrate judge" substituted in text for "magistrate" pursuant to section 321 of Pub. L. 101-650, set out as a note under section 631 of Title 28, Judiciary and Judicial Procedure. Previously, "magistrate" was substituted for "commissioner" pursuant to Pub. L. 90-578. See chapter 43 (§631 et seq.) of Title 28.

TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

Functions, powers, and duties of Secretary of the Army and other offices and officers of Department of the Army under section 401 of this title to extent that they relate generally to location and clearances of bridges and causeways in navigable waters of United States transferred to and vested in Secretary of Transportation by Pub. L. 89-670, §6(g)(6)(A), Oct. 15, 1966, 80 Stat. 941, which created Department of Transportation. Pub. L. 97-449 amended section 401 of this title to reflect transfer made by section 6(g)(6)(A) of Pub. L. 89-670, and repealed section 6(g)(6)(A).

Executive Documents

TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

All offices of collector of customs, comptroller of customs, surveyor of customs, and appraiser of merchandise in Bureau of Customs of Department of the Treasury to which appointments required to be made by President with advice and consent of Senate were ordered abolished with such offices to be terminated not later than Dec. 31, 1966, by Reorg. Plan No. 1 of 1965, eff. May 25, 1965, 30 F.R. 7035, 79 Stat. 1317, set out in the Appendix to Title 5, Government Organization and Employees. All functions of the offices eliminated were already vested in Secretary of the Treasury by Reorg. Plan No. 26 of 1950, eff. July 31, 1950, 15 F.R. 4935, 64 Stat. 1280, set out in the Appendix to Title 5.

§ 414. Vessel removal by Corps of Engineers

(a) Removal of obstructive vessels

(1) In general

Whenever the navigation of any river, lake, harbor, sound, bay, canal, or other navigable waters of the United States shall be obstructed or endangered by any sunken vessel, boat, water craft, raft, or other similar obstruction, and such obstruction has existed for a longer period than thirty days, or whenever the abandonment of such obstruction can be legally established in a less space of time, the sunken vessel, boat, water craft, raft, or other obstruction shall be subject to be broken up, removed, sold, or otherwise disposed of by the Secretary of the Army at his discretion, without liability for any damage to the owners of the same: *Provided*, That in his discretion, the Secretary of the Army may cause reasonable notice of such obstruction of not less than thirty days, unless the legal abandonment of

the obstruction can be established in a less time, to be given by publication, addressed “To whom it may concern,” in a newspaper published nearest to the locality of the obstruction, requiring the removal thereof: *And provided also*, That the Secretary of the Army may, in his discretion, at or after the time of giving such notice, cause sealed proposals to be solicited by public advertisement, giving reasonable notice of not less than ten days, for the removal of such obstruction as soon as possible after the expiration of the above specified thirty days’ notice, in case it has not in the meantime been so removed, these proposals and contracts, at his discretion, to be conditioned that such vessel, boat, water craft, raft, or other obstruction, and all cargo and property contained therein, shall become the property of the contractor, and the contract shall be awarded to the bidder making the proposition most advantageous to the United States: *Provided*, That such bidder shall give satisfactory security to execute the work: *Provided further*, That any money received from the sale of any such wreck, or from any contractor for the removal of wrecks, under this paragraph shall be covered into the Treasury of the United States.

(2) Liability of owner, lessee, or operator

The owner, lessee, or operator of such vessel, boat, watercraft, raft, or other obstruction as described in this subsection shall be liable to the United States for the cost of removal or destruction and disposal as described which exceeds the costs recovered under paragraph (1). Any amount recovered from the owner, lessee, or operator of such vessel pursuant to this subsection to recover costs in excess of the proceeds from the sale or disposition of such vessel shall be deposited in the general fund of the Treasury of the United States.

(b) Removal of abandoned vessel

(1) In general

The Secretary is authorized to remove from the navigable waters of the United States a covered vessel that does not obstruct the navigation of such waters, if—

(A) such removal is determined to be in the public interest by the Secretary, in consultation with any State in which the vessel is located or any Indian Tribe with jurisdiction over the area in which the vessel is located, as applicable; and

(B) in the case of a vessel that is not under the control of the United States by reason of seizure or forfeiture, the Commandant of the Coast Guard determines that the vessel is abandoned.

(2) Interagency agreements

In removing a covered vessel under this subsection, the Secretary—

(A) is authorized to enter into an interagency agreement with the head of any Federal department, agency, or instrumentality that has control of such vessel; and

(B) is authorized to accept funds from such department, agency, or instrumentality for the removal of such vessel.

(3) Liability

The owner of a covered vessel shall be liable to the United States for the costs of removal, destruction, and disposal of such vessel under this subsection.

(4) Covered vessel defined

(A) In general

In this subsection, the term “covered vessel” means a vessel—

(i) determined to be abandoned by the Commandant of the Coast Guard; or

(ii) under the control of the United States by reason of seizure or forfeiture pursuant to any law.

(B) Exclusion

The term “covered vessel” does not include—

(i) any vessel for which the Secretary has removal authority under subsection (a) or section 415 of this title;

(ii) an abandoned barge for which the Commandant of the Coast Guard has the authority to remove under chapter 47 of title 46; and

(iii) a vessel—

(I) for which the owner is not identified, unless determined to be abandoned by the Commandant of the Coast Guard; or

(II) for which the owner has not agreed to pay the costs of removal, destruction, or disposal.

(5) Authorization of appropriations

There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2025 through 2029.

(Mar. 3, 1899, ch. 425, §19, 30 Stat. 1154; July 26, 1947, ch. 343, title II, §205(a), 61 Stat. 501; Pub. L. 99-662, title IX, §939(b), Nov. 17, 1986, 100 Stat. 4199; Pub. L. 118-272, div. A, title I, §1124(a), Jan. 4, 2025, 138 Stat. 3016.)

Editorial Notes

CODIFICATION

Section is from act Mar. 3, 1899, popularly known as the “Rivers and Harbors Appropriation Act of 1899”.

PRIOR PROVISIONS

Section superseded act June 14, 1880, ch. 211, §4, 21 Stat. 197, and act Aug. 2, 1882, ch. 375, 22 Stat. 208, which required the Secretary of War to give notice to the persons interested in wrecks obstructing navigation of the purpose of the Secretary to remove the same unless such parties should do so, and authorized the Secretary to remove the same on the failure of the parties interested to do so, and to sell the same to the highest bidder, and also authorized the Secretary to dispose of any sunken vessel or cargo before removal.

Section also superseded act Sept. 19, 1890, ch. 907, §8, 26 Stat. 454, which authorized the Secretary of War to remove wrecks remaining for more than two months.

AMENDMENTS

2025—Pub. L. 118-272 inserted section catchline and subsec. (a) heading, designated existing provisions of subsec. (a) as par. (1) of subsec. (a), redesignated subsec. (b) as par. (2) of subsec. (a), inserted par. (1) and (2) headings, substituted “described in this subsection” for “described in this section” and “under paragraph (1)”

for “under subsection (a)” in par. (2), and added subsec. (b).

1986—Pub. L. 99-662 designated existing provision as subsec. (a) and added subsec. (b).

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

CHANGE OF NAME

Department of War designated Department of the Army and title of Secretary of War changed to Secretary of the Army by section 205(a) of act July 26, 1947, ch. 343, title II, 61 Stat. 501. Section 205(a) of act July 26, 1947, was repealed by section 53 of act Aug. 10, 1956, ch. 1041, 70A Stat. 641. Section 1 of act Aug. 10, 1956, enacted “Title 10, Armed Forces” which in sections 3010 to 3013 continued Department of the Army under administrative supervision of Secretary of the Army.

TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

Functions, powers and duties of Secretary of the Army and other offices and officers of Department of the Army under section 401 of this title to extent that they relate generally to location and clearances of bridges and causeways in navigable waters of United States transferred to and vested in Secretary of Transportation by Pub. L. 89-670, §6(g)(6)(A), Oct. 15, 1966, 80 Stat. 941, which created Department of Transportation. Pub. L. 97-449 amended section 401 of this title to reflect transfer made by section 6(g)(6)(A) of Pub. L. 89-670, and repealed section 6(g)(6)(A).

Executive Documents

TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS PERTAINING TO AIR FORCE

For transfer of certain functions insofar as they pertain to Air Force, and to extent that they were not previously transferred to Secretary of the Air Force and Department of the Air Force from Secretary of the Army and Department of the Army, see Secretary of Defense Transfer Order No. 40 [App. A(57)], July 22, 1949.

§ 415. Summary removal of water craft obstructing navigation; liability of owner, lessee, or operator

(a) Removal authority

Under emergency, in the case of any vessel, boat, water craft, or raft, or other similar obstruction, sinking or grounding, or being unnecessarily delayed in any Government canal or lock, or in any navigable waters mentioned in section 414 of this title, in such manner as to stop, seriously interfere with, or specially endanger navigation, in the opinion of the Secretary of the Army, or any agent of the United States to whom the Secretary may delegate proper authority, the Secretary of the Army or any such agent shall have the right to take immediate possession of such boat, vessel, or other water craft, or raft, so far as to remove or to destroy it and to clear immediately the canal, lock, or navigable waters aforesaid of the obstruction thereby caused, using his best judgment to prevent any unnecessary injury; and no one shall interfere with or prevent such removal or destruction: *Provided*, That the officer or agent charged with the removal or destruction of an obstruction under this section may in his discretion give notice in writing to the owners of any such obstruction requiring them to remove it: *And provided further*, That the actual expense, including administrative expenses, of removing any such obstruction as aforesaid shall be a charge against such craft and cargo; and if the owners thereof fail or refuse to reim-

burse the United States for such expense within thirty days after notification, then the officer or agent aforesaid may sell the craft or cargo, or any part thereof that may not have been destroyed in removal, and the proceeds of such sale shall be covered into the Treasury of the United States.

(b) Removal requirement

Not later than 24 hours after the Secretary of the Department in which the Coast Guard is operating issues an order to stop or delay navigation in any navigable waters of the United States because of conditions related to the sinking or grounding of a vessel, the owner or operator of the vessel, with the approval of the Secretary of the Army, shall begin removal of the vessel using the most expeditious removal method available or, if appropriate, secure the vessel pending removal to allow navigation to resume. If the owner or operator fails to begin removal or to secure the vessel pending removal or fails to complete removal on an expedited basis, the Secretary of the Army shall remove or destroy the vessel using the summary removal procedures under subsection (a).

(c) Liability of owner, lessee, or operator

The owner, lessee, or operator of such vessel, boat, watercraft, raft, or other obstruction as described in this section shall be liable to the United States for the actual cost, including administrative costs, of removal or destruction and disposal as described which exceeds the costs recovered under subsection (a). Any amount recovered from the owner, lessee, or operator of such vessel pursuant to this subsection to recover costs in excess of the proceeds from the sale or disposition of such vessel shall be deposited in the general fund of the Treasury of the United States.

(Mar. 3, 1899, ch. 425, §20, 30 Stat. 1154; July 26, 1947, ch. 343, title II, §205(a), 61 Stat. 501; Pub. L. 99-662, title IX, §939(b), Nov. 17, 1986, 100 Stat. 4199; Pub. L. 104-303, title II, §218(b), Oct. 12, 1996, 110 Stat. 3696.)

Editorial Notes

CODIFICATION

Section is from part of section 20 of act Mar. 3, 1899, popularly known as the “Rivers and Harbors Appropriation Act of 1899”. Another part of that section, appropriating money necessary to execute its provisions, is classified to section 416 of this title.

Section 20 of act Mar. 3, 1899, also contained a repealing clause with a proviso saving pending actions and rights of actions. It was amended by act Feb. 20, 1900, ch. 23, §3, 31 Stat. 32, and again amended by act June 13, 1902, ch. 1079, §12, 32 Stat. 375, by adding another proviso which is classified to section 418 of this title.

AMENDMENTS

1996—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 104-303, §218(b)(1), substituted “actual expense, including administrative expenses, of removing” for “expense of removing”.

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 104-303, §218(b)(4), added subsec. (b). Former subsec. (b) redesignated (c).

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 104-303, §218(b)(2), (3), redesignated subsec. (b) as (c) and substituted “actual cost, including administrative costs, of removal” for “cost of removal”.

1986—Pub. L. 99-662 designated existing provision as subsec. (a) and added subsec. (b).