

(Pub. L. 109-304, §6(c), Oct. 6, 2006, 120 Stat. 1521.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised Section</i>	<i>Source (U.S. Code)</i>	<i>Source (Statutes at Large)</i>
31103 .....	46 App.:782 (last sentence words before last comma).	Mar. 3, 1925, ch. 428, §2 (last sentence words before last comma), 43 Stat. 1112.

**§ 31104. Venue**

(a) IN GENERAL.—A civil action under this chapter shall be brought in the district court of the United States for the district in which the vessel or cargo is found within the United States.

(b) VESSEL OR CARGO OUTSIDE TERRITORIAL WATERS.—If the vessel or cargo is outside the territorial waters of the United States—

(1) the action shall be brought in the district court of the United States for any district in which any plaintiff resides or has an office for the transaction of business; or

(2) if no plaintiff resides or has an office for the transaction of business in the United States, the action may be brought in the district court of the United States for any district.

(Pub. L. 109-304, §6(c), Oct. 6, 2006, 120 Stat. 1521.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised Section</i>	<i>Source (U.S. Code)</i>	<i>Source (Statutes at Large)</i>
31104 .....	46 App.:782 (1st sentence).	Mar. 3, 1925, ch. 428, §2 (1st sentence), 43 Stat. 1112.

In subsection (a), the words “charged with creating the liability” are omitted as unnecessary.

In subsection (b)(2), the words “in the United States” are omitted as unnecessary.

**§ 31105. Security when counterclaim filed**

If a counterclaim is filed for a cause of action for which the original action is filed under this chapter, the respondent to the counterclaim shall give security in the usual amount and form to respond to the counterclaim, unless the court for cause shown orders otherwise. The proceedings in the original action shall be stayed until the security is given.

(Pub. L. 109-304, §6(c), Oct. 6, 2006, 120 Stat. 1522.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised Section</i>	<i>Source (U.S. Code)</i>	<i>Source (Statutes at Large)</i>
31105 .....	46 App.:783 (proviso).	Mar. 3, 1925, ch. 428, §3 (proviso), 43 Stat. 1112.

The word “counterclaim” is substituted for “cross-libel”, and the words “original action” are substituted for “original libel”, to conform to the terminology in the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (28 App. U.S.C.).

**§ 31106. Exoneration and limitation**

The United States is entitled to the exemptions from and limitations of liability provided by law to an owner, charterer, operator, or agent of a vessel.

(Pub. L. 109-304, §6(c), Oct. 6, 2006, 120 Stat. 1522.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised Section</i>	<i>Source (U.S. Code)</i>	<i>Source (Statutes at Large)</i>
31106 .....	46 App.:789.	Mar. 3, 1925, ch. 428, §9, 43 Stat. 1113.

**§ 31107. Interest**

A judgment in a civil action under this chapter may not include interest for the period before the judgment is issued unless the claim is based on a contract providing for interest.

(Pub. L. 109-304, §6(c), Oct. 6, 2006, 120 Stat. 1522.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised Section</i>	<i>Source (U.S. Code)</i>	<i>Source (Statutes at Large)</i>
31107 .....	46 App.:782 (last sentence words after last comma).	Mar. 3, 1925, ch. 428, §2 (last sentence words after last comma), 43 Stat. 1112.

**§ 31108. Arbitration, compromise, or settlement**

The Attorney General may arbitrate, compromise, or settle a claim under this chapter if a civil action based on the claim has been commenced.

(Pub. L. 109-304, §6(c), Oct. 6, 2006, 120 Stat. 1522.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised Section</i>	<i>Source (U.S. Code)</i>	<i>Source (Statutes at Large)</i>
31108 .....	46 App.:786.	Mar. 3, 1925, ch. 428, §6, 43 Stat. 1113.

The words “claim under this chapter” are substituted for “claim on which a libel or cross libel would lie under the provisions of this chapter” to eliminate unnecessary words.

**§ 31109. Payment of judgment or settlement**

The proper accounting officer of the United States shall pay a final judgment, arbitration award, or settlement under this chapter on presentation of an authenticated copy. Payment shall be made from any money in the Treasury appropriated for the purpose.

(Pub. L. 109-304, §6(c), Oct. 6, 2006, 120 Stat. 1522.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised Section</i>	<i>Source (U.S. Code)</i>	<i>Source (Statutes at Large)</i>
31109 .....	46 App.:787.	Mar. 3, 1925, ch. 428, §7, 43 Stat. 1113.

Reference to an arbitration award is added for consistency with sections 30912 and 31108 of the revised title.

**§ 31110. Subpoenas to officers or members of crew**

An officer or member of the crew of a public vessel may not be subpoenaed in a civil action under this chapter without the consent of—

(1) the Secretary of the department or the head of the independent establishment having control of the vessel at the time the cause of action arose; or

(2) the master or commanding officer of the vessel at the time the subpoena is issued.

(Pub. L. 109-304, §6(c), Oct. 6, 2006, 120 Stat. 1522.)

## HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised Section</i>	<i>Source (U.S. Code)</i>	<i>Source (Statutes at Large)</i>
31110 .....	46 App.:784.	Mar. 3, 1925, ch. 428, §4, 43 Stat. 1112.

**§ 31111. Claims by nationals of foreign countries**

A national of a foreign country may not maintain a civil action under this chapter unless it appears to the satisfaction of the court in which the action is brought that the government of that country, in similar circumstances, allows nationals of the United States to sue in its courts.

(Pub. L. 109-304, §6(c), Oct. 6, 2006, 120 Stat. 1522.)

## HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised Section</i>	<i>Source (U.S. Code)</i>	<i>Source (Statutes at Large)</i>
31111 .....	46 App.:785.	Mar. 3, 1925, ch. 428, §5, 43 Stat. 1113.

**§ 31112. Lien not recognized or created**

This chapter shall not be construed as recognizing the existence of or as creating a lien against a public vessel of the United States.

(Pub. L. 109-304, §6(c), Oct. 6, 2006, 120 Stat. 1522.)

## HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised Section</i>	<i>Source (U.S. Code)</i>	<i>Source (Statutes at Large)</i>
31112 .....	46 App.:788.	Mar. 3, 1925, ch. 428, §8, 43 Stat. 1113.

**§ 31113. Reports**

The Attorney General shall report to Congress at each session thereof all claims settled under this chapter.

(Pub. L. 109-304, §6(c), Oct. 6, 2006, 120 Stat. 1523.)

## HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised Section</i>	<i>Source (U.S. Code)</i>	<i>Source (Statutes at Large)</i>
31113 .....	46 App.:790.	Mar. 3, 1925, ch. 428, §10, 43 Stat. 1113; Aug. 30, 1954, ch. 1076, §1(26), 68 Stat. 968.

**CHAPTER 313—COMMERCIAL INSTRUMENTS AND MARITIME LIENS**

## SUBCHAPTER I—GENERAL

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31305. Waiver of lien rights.  
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31327. Forfeiture of mortgagee interest.  
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## SUBCHAPTER III—MARITIME LIENS

31341. Persons presumed to have authority to procure necessaries.  
31342. Establishing maritime liens.  
31343. Recording and discharging notices of claim of maritime lien.

## HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Section 101 [102] of H.R. 3105 [became Pub. L. 100-710] revises, consolidates, and enacts certain general and permanent laws of the United States related to commercial instruments and liens and public vessels and goods. It amends subtitle III of title 46, United States Code by striking at the end “Chapters 313, 315—Reserved” and substituting “Chapter 313—Commercial Instruments and Maritime Liens”. Chapter 313 is essentially a codification of the Ship Mortgage Act, 1920 (46 App. U.S.C. 911-984). H.R. 3105 is the second step in the process of enacting laws compiled in title 46 of the Code into positive law. The first step in the codification process began in 1983 when certain general and permanent laws related to vessels and seamen were enacted as subtitle II of the title 46, United States Code.

## HOUSE FLOOR STATEMENT

Section 102 of this bill adds a new subtitle III to title 46, which contains a codification of the Ship Mortgage Act, 1920 and other related provisions. A previous version of this codification and the remaining sections of the bill were recently reported by the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee in H.R. 3105 (H. Rept. 100-918). The significant additions or changes by this provision to the version of H.R. 3105 reported by the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee are explained as follows: [see sections 31305, 31321, 31322, 31325, 31329, 31330, 31343 of this title].

**Editorial Notes**

## AMENDMENTS

2002—Pub. L. 107-295, title II, §205(a)(2), Nov. 25, 2002, 116 Stat. 2096, substituted “notices of claim of maritime lien” for “liens on preferred mortgage vessels” in item 31343.

1996—Pub. L. 104-324, title XI, §1113(b)(3), Oct. 19, 1996, 110 Stat. 3970, struck out item 31328 “Limitations on parties serving as trustees of mortgaged vessel interests”.

## SUBCHAPTER I—GENERAL

**§ 31301. Definitions**

In this chapter—

(1) “acknowledge” means making—

(A) an acknowledgment or notarization before a notary public or other official authorized by a law of the United States or a State to take acknowledgments of deeds; or

(B) a certificate issued under the Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents, 1961;

(2) “district court” means—