

RCW 79.100.100 Derelict vessel removal account. (1)(a) The derelict vessel removal account is created in the state treasury. All receipts from RCW 79.100.050 and 79.100.060 and those moneys specified in RCW 88.02.640 must be deposited into the account. The account is authorized to receive fund transfers and appropriations from the general fund, deposits from the derelict vessel removal surcharge under RCW 88.02.640(4), deposits under RCW 79.100.180, as well as gifts, grants, and endowments from public or private sources as may be made from time to time, in trust or otherwise, for the use and benefit of the purposes of this chapter and expend the same or any income according to the terms of the gifts, grants, or endowments provided those terms do not conflict with any provisions of this section or any guidelines developed to prioritize reimbursement of removal projects associated with this chapter.

(b) Moneys in the account may only be spent after appropriation. Expenditures from the account may only be used by the department for developing and administering the vessel turn-in program created in RCW 79.100.160 and to, except as provided in RCW 79.100.130 and 53.08.480, reimburse authorized public entities for up to ninety percent of the total reasonable and auditable administrative, removal, disposal, and environmental damage costs of abandoned or derelict vessels when the previous owner is either unknown after a reasonable search effort or insolvent. Reimbursement may not be made unless the department determines that the public entity has made reasonable efforts to identify and locate the party responsible for the vessel, or any other person or entity that has incurred secondary liability for the vessel under this chapter or RCW 88.26.030, regardless of the title of owner of the vessel.

(c) Funds in the account resulting from transfers from the general fund or from the deposit of funds from the watercraft excise tax as provided for under RCW 82.49.030 must be used to reimburse one hundred percent of costs and should be prioritized for the removal of large vessels.

(d) Costs associated with the removal and disposal of an abandoned or derelict vessel under the authority granted in RCW 53.08.320 also qualify for reimbursement from the derelict vessel removal account.

(e) In each biennium, up to twenty percent of the expenditures from the derelict vessel removal account may be used for administrative expenses of the department of licensing and department of natural resources in implementing this chapter.

(2) Priority for use of this account is for the removal of derelict and abandoned vessels that are in danger of sinking, breaking up, or blocking navigation channels, or that present environmental risks such as leaking fuel or other hazardous substances. The department must develop criteria, in the form of informal guidelines, to prioritize removal projects associated with this chapter, but may not consider whether the applicant is a state or local entity when prioritizing. The guidelines must also include guidance to the authorized public entities as to what removal activities and associated costs are reasonable and eligible for reimbursement.

(3) The department must keep all authorized public entities apprised of the balance of the derelict vessel removal account and the funds available for reimbursement. The guidelines developed by the department must also be made available to the other authorized public entities. This subsection (3) must be satisfied by utilizing the least

costly method, including maintaining the information on the department's internet website, or any other cost-effective method.

(4) An authorized public entity may contribute its ten percent of costs that are not eligible for reimbursement by using in-kind services, including the use of existing staff, equipment, and volunteers.

(5) This chapter does not guarantee reimbursement for an authorized public entity. Authorized public entities seeking certainty in reimbursement prior to taking action under this chapter may first notify the department of their proposed action and the estimated total costs. Upon notification by an authorized public entity, the department must make the authorized public entity aware of the status of the fund and the likelihood of reimbursement being available. The department may offer technical assistance and assure reimbursement for up to two years following the removal action if an assurance is appropriate given the balance of the fund and the details of the proposed action. [2014 c 195 § 603; 2013 c 291 § 2; 2010 c 161 § 1161; 2007 c 342 § 4; 2006 c 153 § 6; 2002 c 286 § 11.]

Findings—Intent—2014 c 195: See notes following RCW 79.100.170 and 79.100.180.

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.