



Substitute Senate Bill No. 426

Public Act No. 18-54

AN ACT CONCERNING ABANDONED FISHING GEAR IN LONG ISLAND SOUND.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Section 26-23 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2018*):

(a) Any weapon, article or implement, capable of being used for the purpose of taking, catching or holding any fish, crustacean, wild or game bird, wild or game quadruped, reptile or amphibian, which is abandoned, discarded or thrown away in an attempt to destroy or conceal evidence or to prevent apprehension, may be seized and taken into possession by any conservation officer. If the owner or person having custody of any such article at the time it is abandoned, discarded or thrown away fails to claim such article within one year after it comes into the possession of such officer, such article shall be forfeited to the state and may be retained for use by the commissioner, may be sold at public auction or may be destroyed at the discretion of said commissioner. The proceeds from such sales shall be paid to the State Treasurer to be credited to the General Fund.

(b) Any derelict lobster gear may be seized by an authorized representative of the commissioner. The commissioner, or the

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commissioner's authorized representative, shall attempt to notify the last known licensee of such derelict lobster gear not later than thirty days following such seizure. In the event: (1) There is no identifying marker on such seized derelict lobster gear, (2) the owner of such seized derelict lobster gear cannot be identified, or (3) the last known licensee of such seized derelict lobster gear fails to claim the seized derelict lobster gear, the commissioner may dispose of such seized derelict lobster gear or authorize the disposal of such seized derelict lobster gear. For the purpose of this subsection, "derelict lobster gear" means any lobster pot, trap, warp or live car found in Connecticut waters that does not have the current Connecticut commercial license number branded on the pot, trap, warp or live car in accordance with section 26-157a and that is not attached to the annual trap tag required by regulations adopted pursuant to section 26-157c for the current trap tag year cycle or the trap tag from the previous year's trap tag year cycle.

Approved June 4, 2018