

Section 31329(a) restricts the sale only to a person eligible to own a documented vessel under section 12102 of title 46 or to the mortgagee, which may be a trustee acting as a holder of a preferred mortgage on a documented vessel for the benefit of a person not eligible to be the holder of a preferred mortgage on that vessel.

Section 31329(b) sets out conditions on the sale to a trustee acting as a holder of a preferred mortgage on a documented vessel for the benefit of a person not eligible to be the holder of a preferred mortgage on that vessel. First, the vessel must be held by the trustee for resale. Second, while being held for resale, the vessel is subject to requisition or purchase during a national emergency under section 902 of the Merchant Marine Act, 1936 (46 App. U.S.C. 1242). And third, the sale of the vessel to the trustee is not a sale foreign within the terms of the First Proviso of section 27 of the Merchant Marine Act, 1920 (46 App. U.S.C. 883).

Section 31329(c) requires a person that is eligible to document the vessel that purchases a vessel from the court to document the vessel. This subsection also requires the person purchasing the vessel from the trustee to document it, thereby restricting to whom the trustee can sell the vessel. Many documented vessels have no national defense utility, such as recreational vessels and fishing vessels. Therefore, both of these restrictions can be waived by the Secretary. As previously discussed, these waivers can be on a case-by-case basis or with a blanket waiver.

Section 31329(d) prohibits a trustee from operating the vessel without the approval of the Secretary.

Section 31329(e) voids any sale that is done contrary to this section.

HOUSE FLOOR STATEMENT

Under section 31329(d) a vessel may be operated by the trustee only with the approval of the Secretary. Under current law a vessel may be documented by a trust if all of the members of the trust are citizens of the United States. If the trust buying the vessel at the court sale includes foreign investors, the vessel cannot be documented. The Committee intends in this section that the vessel will only be “operated” in a maintenance manner, but not in a commercial service.

AMENDMENTS

2006—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 109-304, §15(32)(A), substituted “section 12103” for “section 12102”.

Subsec. (b)(2). Pub. L. 109-304, §15(32)(B)(i), substituted “chapter 563 of this title” for “section 902 of the Merchant Marine Act, 1936 (46 App. U.S.C. 1242)”.

Subsec. (b)(3). Pub. L. 109-304, §15(32)(B)(ii), substituted “sale to a person not a citizen of the United States under section 12132 of this title” for “sale foreign within the terms of the first proviso of section 27 of the Merchant Marine Act, 1920 (46 App. U.S.C. 883)”.

1996—Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 104-324 added subsec. (f).

§ 31330. Penalties

(a)(1) A mortgagor shall be fined under title 18, imprisoned for not more than 2 years, or both, if the mortgagor—

(A) with intent to defraud, does not disclose an obligation on a vessel as required by section 31323(a) of this title;

(B) with intent to defraud, incurs a contractual obligation in violation of section 31323(b) of this title;

(C) with intent to hinder or defraud an existing or future creditor of the mortgagor or a lienor of the vessel, files a mortgage with the Secretary of Transportation; or

(D) with intent to defraud, does not comply with section 31321(h) of this title.

(2) A mortgagor is liable to the United States Government for a civil penalty of not more than \$10,000 if the mortgagor—

(A) does not disclose an obligation on a vessel as required by section 31323(a) of this title;

(B) incurs a contractual obligation in violation of section 31323(b) of this title;

(C) files with the Secretary a mortgage made not in good faith; or

(D) does not comply with section 31321(h) of this title.

(b)(1) A person that knowingly violates section 31329 of this title shall be fined under title 18, imprisoned for not more than 3 years, or both.

(2) A person violating section 31329 of this title is liable to the Government for a civil penalty of not more than \$25,000.

(3) A vessel involved in a violation under section 31329 of this title and its equipment may be seized by, and forfeited to, the Government.

(c) If a person not an individual violates this section, the president or chief executive of the person also is subject to any penalty provided under this section.

(Pub. L. 100-710, title I, §102(c), Nov. 23, 1988, 102 Stat. 4747; Pub. L. 104-324, title XI, §1113(b)(2), Oct. 19, 1996, 110 Stat. 3970.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised section</i>	<i>Source section (U.S. Code)</i>
31330(a)	46:941(b) (1st sentence)
31330(b)	New
31330(c)	46:941(b) (1st sentence)

Section 31330(a) provides for criminal penalties for not disclosing obligations, incurring contractual obligations in violation of section 31323(b), and filing a mortgage made not in good faith. This subsection makes a substantive change to law by adding civil penalties and by making it a crime to record with the Secretary of Transportation a mortgage made not in good faith with the intent to hinder an existing or future creditor of the mortgagor or a lienor of the vessel. This is done since the affidavit of good faith has been eliminated from the elements of a preferred mortgage.

Section 31330(b) adds criminal and civil penalties for violating the sale and trust requirements under sections 31328 and 31329. It also makes a vessel and its equipment involved in those violations subject to seizure by the Government.

Section 31330(c) makes the president or chief executive officer of a corporation or association liable as a mortgagor for the penalties under this section.

HOUSE FLOOR STATEMENT

Subsection (a) of this section adds criminal and civil penalties for a preferred mortgagor's failure to carry out certain requirements under chapter 313 of title 46 (as enacted by this Act).

AMENDMENTS

1996—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 104-324 struck out “31328 or” before “31329” in pars. (1) to (3).

SUBCHAPTER III—MARITIME LIENS

§ 31341. Persons presumed to have authority to procure necessities

(a) The following persons are presumed to have authority to procure necessities for a vessel:

(1) the owner;

(2) the master;

(3) a person entrusted with the management of the vessel at the port of supply; or

(4) an officer or agent appointed by—

- (A) the owner;
- (B) a charterer;
- (C) an owner *pro hac vice*; or
- (D) an agreed buyer in possession of the vessel.

(b) A person tortiously or unlawfully in possession or charge of a vessel has no authority to procure necessities for the vessel.

(Pub. L. 100-710, title I, §102(c), Nov. 23, 1988, 102 Stat. 4748; Pub. L. 101-225, title III, §303(5), Dec. 12, 1989, 103 Stat. 1924.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Revised section	Source section (U.S. Code)
31341(a)	46:972 (1st sentence), 973
31341(b)	46:972 (2d sentence)

Section 31341(a) lists those persons who are presumed to have authority to procure necessities for a vessel. These include the owner, master, or a manager at the port of supply; and an officer or agent appointed by the owner, charterer, owner *pro hac vice*, or buyer in possession of the vessel. This subsection makes no substantive change to law.

Section 31341(b) provides that any person that is tortiously or unlawfully in possession of or in charge of a vessel has no authority to procure necessities. This subsection makes no substantive change to law.

AMENDMENTS

1989—Subsec. (a)(3). Pub. L. 101-225 substituted “management” for “mangement”.

§ 31342. Establishing maritime liens

(a) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, a person providing necessities to a vessel on the order of the owner or a person authorized by the owner—

- (1) has a maritime lien on the vessel;
- (2) may bring a civil action *in rem* to enforce the lien; and
- (3) is not required to allege or prove in the action that credit was given to the vessel.

(b) This section does not apply to a public vessel.

(Pub. L. 100-710, title I, §102(c), Nov. 23, 1988, 102 Stat. 4748; Pub. L. 101-225, title III, §303(6), Dec. 12, 1989, 103 Stat. 1924.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Revised section	Source section (U.S. Code)
31342	46:971

Section 31342 provides that any authorized person providing necessities for a vessel has a maritime lien on the vessel, may bring a civil action *in rem* in admiralty to enforce the lien, and is not required to allege or prove that credit was given to the vessel. “Providing” has been substituted for “furnishing” for consistency with other laws. This section makes no substantive change to law. This section does not supersede the prohibition under the Public Vessels Act, the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act, or the Suits in Admiralty Act, on bringing an *in rem* action against a public vessel.

AMENDMENTS

1989—Pub. L. 101-225 designated existing provisions as subsec. (a), substituted “Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, a person providing necessities to a vessel on the order of the owner” for “A person providing necessities to a vessel (except a pub-

lic vessel) on the order of a person listed in section 31341 of this title”, and added subsec. (b).

§ 31343. Recording and discharging notices of claim of maritime lien

(a) Except as provided under subsection (d) of this section, a person claiming a lien on a vessel documented, or for which an application for documentation has been filed, under chapter 121 may record with the Secretary of Transportation a notice of that person’s lien claim on the vessel. To be recordable, the notice must—

- (1) state the nature of the lien;
- (2) state the date the lien was established;
- (3) state the amount of the lien;
- (4) state the name and address of the person; and
- (5) be signed and acknowledged.

(b)(1) The Secretary shall record a notice complying with subsection (a) of this section if, when the notice is presented to the Secretary for recording, the person having the claim files with the notice a declaration stating the following:

(A) The information in the notice is true and correct to the best of the knowledge, information, and belief of the individual who signed it.

(B) A copy of the notice, as presented for recording, has been sent to each of the following:

- (i) The owner of the vessel.
- (ii) Each person that recorded under subsection (a) of this section an unexpired notice of a claim of an undischarged lien on the vessel.
- (iii) The mortgagee of each mortgage filed or recorded under section 31321 of this title that is an undischarged mortgage on the vessel.

(2) A declaration under this subsection filed by a person that is not an individual must be signed by the president, member, partner, trustee, or other individual authorized to execute the declaration on behalf of the person.

(c)(1) On full and final discharge of the indebtedness that is the basis for a notice of claim of lien recorded under subsection (b) of this section, the person having the claim shall provide the Secretary with an acknowledged certificate of discharge of the indebtedness. The Secretary shall record the certificate.

(2) The district courts of the United States shall have jurisdiction over a civil action in Admiralty to declare that a vessel is not subject to a lien claimed under subsection (b) of this section, or that the vessel is not subject to the notice of claim of lien, or both, regardless of the amount in controversy or the citizenship of the parties. Venue in such an action shall be in the district where the vessel is found or where the claimant resides or where the notice of claim of lien is recorded. The court may award costs and attorneys fees to the prevailing party, unless the court finds that the position of the other party was substantially justified or other circumstances make an award of costs and attorneys fees unjust. The Secretary shall record any such declaratory order.

(d) A person claiming a lien on a vessel covered by a preferred mortgage under section

31322(d) of this title must record and discharge the lien as provided by the law of the State in which the vessel is titled.

(e) A notice of claim of lien recorded under subsection (b) of this section shall expire 3 years after the date the lien was established, as such date is stated in the notice under subsection (a) of this section.

(f) This section does not alter in any respect the law pertaining to the establishment of a maritime lien, the remedy provided by such a lien, or the defenses thereto, including any defense under the doctrine of laches.

(Pub. L. 100-710, title I, §102(c), Nov. 23, 1988, 102 Stat. 4748; Pub. L. 107-295, title II, §205(a)(1), Nov. 25, 2002, 116 Stat. 2095.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised section</i>	<i>Source section (U.S. Code)</i>
31343	46:925

Section 31343 provides that any person claiming a lien on a vessel covered by a preferred mortgage may record a notice of lien. This notice must state the nature of the lien, date it was established; the amount; and the name and address of the person claiming a lien, and it must be acknowledged. The Secretary must record a notice of lien if it complies with these requirements. When any part of the indebtedness is discharged, the claimant shall provide the Secretary with a written, acknowledged certificate of discharge of the indebtedness, and the Secretary shall record the certificate. This section makes no substantive change to law.

Section 31343(c) provides that, on the full and final discharge of an indebtedness that is the basis for a claim, the person having the claim shall provide the Secretary with an acknowledged certificate of discharge on the request of the Secretary or owner of the vessel. This subsection makes a substantive change to law by not requiring partial discharges to be filed, as well as making the filing of discharge certificates only at the request of the Secretary or owner of the vessel.

HOUSE FLOOR STATEMENT

Subsection (d) of this section requires a person claiming a lien on a vessel covered by a preferred mortgage under section 31322(d) to record and discharge the lien as provided by the law of the State in which the vessel is titled.

AMENDMENTS

2002—Pub. L. 107-295, §205(a)(1)(A), substituted “notices of claim of maritime lien” for “liens on preferred mortgage vessels” in section catchline.

Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 107-295, §205(a)(1)(B), substituted “documented, or for which an application for documentation has been filed, under chapter 121” for “covered by a preferred mortgage filed or recorded under this chapter” in introductory provisions.

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 107-295, §205(a)(1)(C), amended subsec. (b) generally. Prior to amendment, subsec. (b) read as follows: “The Secretary shall record a notice complying with subsection (a) of this section.”

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 107-295, §205(a)(1)(D), amended subsec. (c) generally. Prior to amendment, subsec. (c) read as follows: “On full and final discharge of the indebtedness that is the basis for a claim recorded under subsection (b) of this section, on request of the Secretary or owner, the person having the claim shall provide the Secretary with an acknowledged certificate of discharge of the indebtedness. The Secretary shall record the certificate.”

Subsecs. (e), (f). Pub. L. 107-295, §205(a)(1)(E), added subsecs. (e) and (f).

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2002 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 107-295 effective Jan. 1, 2003, see section 205(e) of Pub. L. 107-295, set out as a note under section 31325 of this title.

Subtitle IV—Regulation of Ocean Shipping

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PART A—OCEAN SHIPPING

CHAPTER 401—GENERAL

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§ 40101. Purposes

The purposes of this part are to—

(1) establish a nondiscriminatory regulatory process for the common carriage of goods by water in the foreign commerce of the United States with a minimum of government intervention and regulatory costs;

(2) provide an efficient and economic transportation system in the ocean commerce of the United States that is, insofar as possible, in harmony with, and responsive to, international shipping practices;

(3) encourage the development of an economically sound and efficient liner fleet of vessels of the United States capable of meeting national security needs; and

(4) promote the growth and development of United States exports through competitive and efficient ocean transportation and by placing a greater reliance on the marketplace.

(Pub. L. 109-304, §7, 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>
40101	46 App.:1701.	Pub. L. 98-237, §2, Mar. 20, 1984, 98 Stat. 67; Pub. L. 105-258, title I, §101, Oct. 14, 1998, 112 Stat. 1902.

EFFECTS ON CERTAIN AGREEMENTS AND CONTRACTS

Pub. L. 98-237, §20(d), Mar. 20, 1984, 98 Stat. 90; Pub. L. 105-258, title I, §117(1), Oct. 14, 1998, 112 Stat. 1914,