

§ 1703. Seizure and forfeiture of vessels

(a) Vessels subject to seizure and forfeiture

Whenever any vessel which shall have been built, purchased, fitted out in whole or in part, or held, in the United States or elsewhere, for the purpose of being employed to defraud the revenue or to smuggle any merchandise into the United States, or to smuggle any merchandise into the territory of any foreign government in violation of the laws there in force, if under the laws of such foreign government any penalty or forfeiture is provided for violation of the laws of the United States respecting the customs revenue, or whenever any vessel which shall be found, or discovered to have been employed, or attempted to be employed, within the United States for any such purpose, or in anywise in assistance thereof, or whenever any vessel of the United States which shall be found, or discovered to have been employed, or attempted to be employed at any place, for any such purpose, or is anywise in assistance thereof, if not subsequently forfeited to the United States or to a foreign government, is found at any place at which any such vessel may be examined by an officer of the customs in the enforcement of any law respecting the revenue, the said vessel and its cargo shall be seized and forfeited.

(b) "Vessels of the United States" defined

Every vessel which is documented, owned, or controlled in the United States, and every vessel of foreign registry which is, directly or indirectly, substantially owned or controlled by any citizen of, or corporation incorporated, owned, or controlled in, the United States, shall, for the purposes of this section, be deemed a vessel of the United States.

(c) Acts constituting prima facie evidence vessel engaged in smuggling

For the purposes of this section, the fact that a vessel has become subject to pursuit as provided in section 1581 of this title, or is a hovering vessel, or that a vessel fails, at any place within the customs waters of the United States or within a customs-enforcement area, to display lights as required by law, shall be prima facie evidence that such vessel is being, or has been, or is attempted to be employed to defraud the revenue of the United States.

(Aug. 5, 1935, ch. 438, title I, § 3, 49 Stat. 518.)

§ 1704. Refusal or revocation of registry, enrollment, license or number on evidence that vessel engaging in smuggling; appeal; immunity from liability

Subject to appeal to the Secretary of the Treasury and under such regulations as he may prescribe, when the Secretary of Transportation is shown upon evidence which he deems sufficient that such vessel is being, or is intended to be, employed to smuggle, transport, or otherwise assist in the unlawful introduction or importation into the United States of any merchandise or person, or to smuggle any merchandise into the territory of any foreign government in violation of the laws there in force, if under the laws of such foreign government any penalty or forfeiture is provided for violation of

the laws of the United States respecting the customs revenue, or whenever, from the design or fittings of any vessel or the nature of any repairs made thereon, it is apparent to the Secretary of Transportation that such vessel has been built or adapted for the purpose of smuggling merchandise, the the¹ Secretary of Transportation shall revoke any endorsement on the vessel's certificate of documentation or number (when the Secretary is the authority issuing the number under chapter 123 of title 46) or refuse the same if application be made therefor, as the case may be. The Secretary of Transportation and all persons acting by or under his direction shall be indemnified from any penalties or actions for damages for carrying out the provisions of this section.

(Aug. 5, 1935, ch. 438, title I, § 4, 49 Stat. 519; 1946 Reorg. Plan No. 3, §§101-104, eff. July 16, 1946, 11 F.R. 7875, 60 Stat. 1097; Pub. L. 103-182, title VI, § 689(b), Dec. 8, 1993, 107 Stat. 2222.)

AMENDMENTS

1993—Pub. L. 103-182, § 689(b)(4), substituted "The Secretary of Transportation and all persons" for "Such collector and all persons".

Pub. L. 103-182, § 689(b)(3), which directed the substitution of "the Secretary of Transportation shall revoke any endorsement on the vessel's certificate of documentation or number (when the Secretary is the authority issuing the number under chapter 123 of title 46)" for "said collector shall revoke the registry, enrollment, license, or number of such vessel", was executed by making the substitution in text which read "said vessel" rather than "such vessel", to reflect the probable intent of Congress.

Pub. L. 103-182, § 689(b)(1), (2), substituted "when the Secretary of Transportation" for "whenever the collector of customs of the district in which any vessel is, or is sought to be, registered, enrolled, licensed, or numbered," and "is apparent to the Secretary of Transportation" for "is apparent to such collector".

TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

Coast Guard transferred to Department of Transportation and functions, powers, and duties, relating to Coast Guard, of Secretary of the Treasury and of other offices and officers of Department of the Treasury transferred to Secretary of Transportation by section 6(b)(1) of Pub. L. 89-670, Oct. 15, 1966, 80 Stat. 938. Section 6(b)(2), however, provided that notwithstanding such transfer of functions, Coast Guard shall operate as part of Navy in time of war or when President directs as provided in section 3 of Title 14, Coast Guard. See section 108 of Title 49, Transportation.

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 were required to be made by President with advice and consent of Senate ordered abolished, with such offices to be terminated not later than December 31, 1966, by Reorg. Plan No. 1, of 1965, eff. May 25, 1965, 30 F.R. 7035, 79 Stat. 1317, set out as a note under section 1 of this title.

Functions of all officers of Department of the Treasury and functions of all agencies and employees of such Department transferred, with certain exceptions, to Secretary of the Treasury, with power vested in him to authorize their performance or performance of any of his functions, by any of those officers, agencies, and employees, by Reorg. Plan No. 26, of 1950, §§1, 2, eff. July 31, 1950, 15 F.R. 4935, 64 Stat. 1280, 1281, set out in the Appendix to Title 5, Government Organization and Employees. Under the Plan, collectors of customs and

¹ So in original.