

542 of Title 6. For establishment of U.S. Customs and Border Protection in the Department of Homeland Security, treated as if included in Pub. L. 107-296 as of Nov. 25, 2002, see section 211 of Title 6, as amended generally by Pub. L. 114-125, and section 802(b) of Pub. L. 114-125, set out as a note under section 211 of Title 6.

For transfer of authorities, functions, personnel, and assets of the Coast Guard, including the authorities and functions of the Secretary of Transportation relating thereto, to the Department of Homeland Security, and for treatment of related references, see sections 468(b), 551(d), 552(d), and 557 of Title 6, Domestic Security, and the Department of Homeland Security Reorganization Plan of November 25, 2002, as modified, set out as a note under section 542 of Title 6.

#### § 1614. Release of seized property

If any person claiming an interest in any vessel, vehicle, aircraft, merchandise, or baggage seized under the provisions of this chapter offers to pay the value of such vessel, vehicle, aircraft, merchandise, or baggage, as determined under section 1606 of this title, and it appears that such person has in fact a substantial interest therein, the appropriate customs officer may, subject to the approval of the Secretary of the Treasury if under the customs laws, or the Commandant of the Coast Guard or the Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, as the case may be, if under the navigation laws, accept such offer and release the vessel, vehicle, aircraft, merchandise, or baggage seized upon the payment of such value thereof, which shall be distributed in the order provided in section 1613 of this title.

(June 17, 1930, ch. 497, title IV, § 614, 46 Stat. 757; 1946 Reorg. Plan No. 3, §§101-104, eff. July 16, 1946, 11 F.R. 7875, 60 Stat. 1097; Pub. L. 91-271, title III, §301(b), June 2, 1970, 84 Stat. 287; Pub. L. 98-473, title II, §321, Oct. 12, 1984, 98 Stat. 2056; Pub. L. 98-573, title II, §213(a)(12), Oct. 30, 1984, 98 Stat. 2987; Pub. L. 114-125, title VIII, §802(d)(2), Feb. 24, 2016, 130 Stat. 210.)

#### PRIOR PROVISIONS

Provisions similar to those in this section were contained in act Sept. 21, 1922, ch. 356, title IV, §614, 42 Stat. 987. That section was superseded by section 614 of act June 17, 1930, comprising this section, and repealed by section 651(a)(1) of the 1930 act.

A prior provision authorizing collectors, subject to the approval of the Secretary of the Treasury, to release seized merchandise on payment of the appraised value when the appraised value did not exceed \$1,000, were contained in R.S. §3081, prior to repeal by act Sept. 21, 1922, ch. 356, title IV, §642, 42 Stat. 989.

#### AMENDMENTS

1984—Pub. L. 98-573 and Pub. L. 98-473 inserted reference to aircraft in three places.

1970—Pub. L. 91-271 substituted reference to the appropriate customs officer for reference to the collector.

#### CHANGE OF NAME

“Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection” substituted for “Commissioner of Customs” in text on authority of section 802(d)(2) of Pub. L. 114-125, set out as a note under section 211 of Title 6, Domestic Security.

#### EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1984 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 98-573 effective Oct. 15, 1984, see section 214(e) of Pub. L. 98-573, set out as a note under section 1304 of this title.

#### EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1970 AMENDMENT

For effective date of amendment by Pub. L. 91-271, see section 203 of Pub. L. 91-271, set out as a note under section 1500 of this title.

#### TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

For transfer of authorities, functions, personnel, and assets of the Coast Guard, including the authorities and functions of the Secretary of Transportation relating thereto, to the Department of Homeland Security, and for treatment of related references, see sections 468(b), 551(d), 552(d), and 557 of Title 6, Domestic Security, and the Department of Homeland Security Reorganization Plan of November 25, 2002, set out as a note under section 542 of Title 6.

For transfer of functions, personnel, assets, and liabilities of the United States Customs Service of the Department of the Treasury, including functions of the Secretary of the Treasury relating thereto, to the Secretary of Homeland Security, and for treatment of related references, see sections 203(1), 551(d), 552(d), and 557 of Title 6, Domestic Security, and the Department of Homeland Security Reorganization Plan of November 25, 2002, as modified, set out as a note under section 542 of Title 6. For establishment of U.S. Customs and Border Protection in the Department of Homeland Security, treated as if included in Pub. L. 107-296 as of Nov. 25, 2002, see section 211 of Title 6, as amended generally by Pub. L. 114-125, and section 802(b) of Pub. L. 114-125, set out as a note under section 211 of Title 6.

Substitution in text of reference to Commandant of the Coast Guard or Commissioner of Customs for “the Secretary of Commerce” under the authority of Reorg. Plan No. 3 of 1946, see Transfer of Functions note set out under section 1613 of this title.

#### § 1615. Burden of proof in forfeiture proceedings

In all suits or actions (other than those arising under section 1592 of this title) brought for the forfeiture of any vessel, vehicle, aircraft, merchandise, or baggage seized under the provisions of any law relating to the collection of duties on imports or tonnage, where the property is claimed by any person, the burden of proof shall lie upon such claimant; and in all suits or actions brought for the recovery of the value of any vessel, vehicle, aircraft, merchandise, or baggage, because of violation of any such law, the burden of proof shall be upon the defendant: *Provided*, That probable cause shall be first shown for the institution of such suit or action, to be judged of by the court, subject to the following rules of proof:

(1) The testimony or deposition of the officer of the customs who has boarded or required to come to a stop or seized a vessel, vehicle, or aircraft, or has arrested a person, shall be prima facie evidence of the place where the act in question occurred.

(2) Marks, labels, brands, or stamps, indicative of foreign origin, upon or accompanying merchandise<sup>1</sup> or containers of merchandise, shall be prima facie evidence of the foreign origin of such merchandise.

(3) The fact that a vessel of any description is found, or discovered to have been, in the vicinity of any hovering vessel and under any circumstances indicating contact or communication therewith, whether by proceeding to or from such vessel, or by coming to in the vicinity of such vessel, or by delivering to or receiving from such vessel any merchandise, per-

<sup>1</sup> So in original. Probably should be “merchandise”.