

“(b) On default of any term of the preferred mortgage, the mortgagee may enforce the preferred mortgage lien in—

“(1) a civil action in rem for a documented vessel or a vessel to be documented under chapter 121 of this title;

“(2) a civil action in personam in admiralty against the mortgagor, comaker, or guarantor for the amount of the outstanding indebtedness secured by the mortgaged vessel or any deficiency in full payment of that indebtedness; and

“(3) a civil action against the mortgagor, comaker, or guarantor for the amount of the outstanding indebtedness secured by the mortgaged vessel or any deficiency in full payment of that indebtedness.

“(c) The district courts have original jurisdiction of a civil action brought under subsection (b) of this section. However, for documented vessels or vessels to be documented under chapter 121 of this title, this jurisdiction is exclusive of the courts of the States for a civil action under subsection (b)(1) of this section.”

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2008 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 110-181 effective as if included in the enactment of Pub. L. 109-304, see section 3529(b)(2) of Pub. L. 110-181, set out as a note under section 3205 of this title.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2002 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 107-295, title II, §205(e), Nov. 25, 2002, 116 Stat. 2096, provided that: “This section [see Tables for classification] shall take effect January 1, 2003.”

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective Jan. 1, 1989, with certain exceptions and qualifications, see section 107 of Pub. L. 100-710, set out as a note under section 31301 of this title.

CONSTRUCTION OF 1996 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 104-324, title XI, §1124(c), Oct. 19, 1996, 110 Stat. 3981, provided that: “The amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) [amending this section] may not be construed to imply that remedies other than judicial remedies were not available before the date of enactment of this section [Oct. 19, 1996] to enforce claims for outstanding indebtedness secured by mortgaged vessels.”

§ 31326. Court sales to enforce preferred mortgage liens and maritime liens and priority of claims

(a) When a vessel is sold by order of a district court in a civil action in rem brought to enforce a preferred mortgage lien or a maritime lien, any claim in the vessel existing on the date of sale is terminated, including a possessory common law lien of which a person is deprived under section 31325(e)(2) of this title, and the vessel is sold free of all those claims.

(b) Each of the claims terminated under subsection (a) of this section attaches, in the same amount and in accordance with their priorities to the proceeds of the sale, except that—

(1) the preferred mortgage lien, including a preferred mortgage lien on a foreign vessel whose mortgage has been guaranteed under chapter 537 of this title, has priority over all claims against the vessel (except for expenses and fees allowed by the court, costs imposed by the court, and preferred maritime liens); and

(2) for a foreign vessel whose mortgage has not been guaranteed under chapter 537 of this

title, the preferred mortgage lien is subordinate to a maritime lien for necessities provided in the United States.

(Pub. L. 100-710, title I, §102(c), Nov. 23, 1988, 102 Stat. 4746; Pub. L. 103-160, div. A, title XIII, §1360, Nov. 30, 1993, 107 Stat. 1816; Pub. L. 109-304, §15(31), Oct. 6, 2006, 120 Stat. 1704.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Revised section	Source section (U.S. Code)
31326(a)	46:953(b), 961(c)
31326(b)(1)	46:953(b)
31326(b)(2)	46:951 (2d par. proviso)

Section 31326(a) provides for a court-ordered sale to enforce a preferred mortgage lien or a maritime lien and the priority of claims. When a mortgaged vessel is sold by court order in a civil action *in rem*, any prior claim in the vessel is terminated—including any possessory common law lien. This subsection makes a substantive change to law by making the process the same for maritime liens as was provided for preferred mortgage liens. This eliminates the requirement for making a new mortgagee for a court sale to enforce a maritime lien. This section also broadens the jurisdiction to courts in the territories, as defined in section 31301.

Section 31326(b)(1) provides that each of these terminated claims attaches, in the same amount and priority, to the proceeds of sale—except that the preferred mortgage lien always has priority over these other claims. However, the preferred mortgage lien is still subordinated to expenses and fees allowed by the court, costs imposed by the court, and any preferred maritime liens. This may include statutory fees such as the fee of the United States Marshal under 28 U.S.C. 1921. Except for broadening its coverage under subsection (a), this makes no substantive change to law.

Section 31326(b)(2) provides in the case of a foreign vessel, the preferred mortgage lien is also subordinated to a maritime lien for necessities performed or supplied for the vessel in the United States. “Provided” has been substituted for “provided or supplied” for consistency in usage. Except for broadening its coverage under subsection (a), this paragraph makes no substantive change to law.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2006—Subsec. (b)(1). Pub. L. 109-304, §15(31)(A), substituted “chapter 537 of this title,” for “title XI of the Merchant Marine Act, 1936 (46 App. U.S.C. 1101 et seq.)”.

Subsec. (b)(2). Pub. L. 109-304, §15(31)(B), substituted “chapter 537 of this title” for “title XI of that Act”.

1993—Subsec. (b)(1). Pub. L. 103-160, §1260(1), inserted “, including a preferred mortgage lien on a foreign vessel whose mortgage has been guaranteed under title XI of the Merchant Marine Act, 1936 (46 App. U.S.C. 1101 et seq.)” after “preferred mortgage lien”.

Subsec. (b)(2). Pub. L. 103-160, §1360(2), inserted “whose mortgage has not been guaranteed under title XI of that Act” after “foreign vessel”.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective Jan. 1, 1989, with certain exceptions and qualifications, see section 107 of Pub. L. 100-710, set out as a note under section 31301 of this title.

§ 31327. Forfeiture of mortgagee interest

The interest of a mortgagee in a documented vessel or a vessel covered by a preferred mortgage under section 31322(d) of this title may be terminated by a forfeiture of the vessel for a