



A Deeper Dive into Issues Addressed by the Coastal Marine Strategy

Derelict Vessels

What's the issue?

"Derelict vessels" are lost, abandoned or wrecked vessels which are left to deteriorate in the water or on the shore. They pose risks to ecosystems by contaminating water, and to human safety by blocking navigation. They also impact the many sectors that depend on the ocean, including fishing, tourism and recreation. This is an issue across coastal B.C., but especially in Central and Southern Vancouver Island and around Vancouver. For example, in March 2025, the "McBarge" – which had been a floating restaurant on False Creek in the 1980s – was in the news when it sunk in Maple Ridge. Over 1,400 derelict or abandoned vessels are awaiting cleanup in coastal B.C.

Why has it been hard to fix?

Derelict vessel clean-up is difficult due to an outdated licensing system that makes tracking ownership of vessels difficult, high costs to properly dispose of vessels and insufficient capacity to handle disposal and recycling, as well as jurisdictional complexity. The following have jurisdiction at some point in the tracking, reporting, enforcement and disposal process: the B.C. Ministry of Environment and Parks, B.C. Ministry of Water, Lands and Resource Stewardship, port authorities, local governments, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), the Canadian Coast Guard, and Transport Canada. The First Nation on whose territory the derelict vessel is located may also exercise its inherent and constitutional jurisdiction.

How can the Coastal Marine Strategy help solve it?

The B.C. Coastal Marine Strategy commits to:

- Continue to examine the life cycle of boats to identify waste prevention, reduction and end-of-life opportunities.
- Develop a long-term vision for the Clean Coast, Clean Waters initiative that supports the prevention, cleanup, monitoring, removal, recycling and disposal of polluting marine debris and derelict vessels while providing employment opportunities in coastal communities.
- Support additional coastal cleanups of plastics and debris, including actions to address abandoned and derelict trespass structures and derelict vessels in the intertidal zone.

These will work in concert with existing DFO and Transport Canada initiatives.

For more information please contact

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