

- SUBJECT:** Applications for hull identification and motor serial numbers
- COMMITTEE:** State Recreational Resources — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 9 ayes — Kuempel, Cook, Alexander, Crownover, J. Davis, Ellis, Homer, Hope, Ritter
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** None
- BACKGROUND:** Under Parks and Wildlife Code, chapter 31, a vessel owner may apply for a hull identification number by submitting a \$2 fee to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). No person may intentionally or knowingly destroy, remove, alter, cover, or deface a hull identification number, whether issued by the manufacturer or by TPWD. A person who has a vessel with an altered, defaced, mutilated, or removed hull identification number or outboard motor serial number must file a sworn statement with TPWD describing the vessel or motor, proving legal ownership, and stating the reason for destruction, removal, or defacement of the number.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 3462 would require that all vessels manufactured in Texas for sale and all vessels sold, numbered, or titled in Texas carry a manufacturer's hull identification number, unless the U.S. Coast Guard does not require it. An application for a hull identification number would have to include a sworn statement describing the vessel, proving legal ownership, and stating the reason for the lack of a hull identification number, if known. A \$25 fee and a certificate of inspection by a commissioned game warden would have to accompany the application.
- The bill also would make it illegal to destroy, deface, alter, cover, or remove the serial number of an outboard motor. A person filing a statement of an altered, defaced, mutilated, or removed hull identification number or motor serial number would have to submit a \$25 fee and a certificate of inspection by a game warden. Upon receipt of this statement in approved form, TPWD would record the information and issue a serial or identification number.

These provisions would not apply to vessels with a valid marine document issued by the U.S. Coast Guard's National Vessel Documentation Center or a successor agency.

An application for a certificate of title on a homemade vessel also would have to be accompanied by a certificate of inspection from a game warden.

CSHB 3462 would take effect September 1, 1999, and would apply only to applications filed on or after that date.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

CSHB 3462 would standardize the requirements for applying for a new hull identification number or outboard motor serial number.

Removal of a hull identification number on a stolen boat is a common occurrence. Requiring an inspection by a game warden and presentation of proof of ownership for such applications should help stop the illegal resale of stolen boats. Currently, it is too easy for a thief to deface an identification number or serial number, apply for a new number from TPWD, and establish ownership without any kind of investigation. The required certificate of inspection would help protect boat owners and recover stolen boats.

TPWD funds many of its fishing and hunting programs through fees. Only boaters applying for a new registration number would have to pay the new \$25 fee. Those with homemade boats already pay a \$25 application fee when applying for a certificate of title.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

A \$25 fee would be excessive for a simple identification or serial number issuance. Not all boats are stolen, and many instances of missing identification numbers do not warrant an investigation.

NOTES:

The committee substitute modified the caption of the original bill to make it more specific. It also added language regarding exceptions for vessels for which the Coast Guard does not require a hull identification number or for which the National Vessel Documentation Center has issued a valid marine document.