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Frazier bill to fund removal of abandoned commercial vessels from Delta gets unanimous bipartisan support from Assembly committee

SACRAMENTO – The Assembly’s Natural Resources Committee today unanimously approved AB 2441, a bill by Assemblymember Jim Frazier, D-Discovery Bay, which would secure funding to remove abandoned and derelict commercial marine vessels throughout the Delta region.

“The Delta is a vibrant ecosystem that serves as a source of water for millions of Californians, supports a world-class agricultural industry and is a hub for businesses and recreational activities,” Frazier said. “Abandoned and derelict vessels not only impair navigation in Delta waterways, they pose a significant environmental threat as toxic substances such as asbestos, lead-based paints, gasoline, diesel fuel and antifreeze leach into the Delta.”

In 2017, the Department of Fish and Wildlife conducted a thorough aerial survey of the Delta and found that there are 54 abandoned or derelict commercial vessels in Delta waterways. These commercial vessels pose a substantial threat to the Delta and are extremely costly to remove. Meanwhile, two additional abandoned or derelict commercial vessels appear in the Delta each year on average.

“The estimated cost to rid the Delta of all abandoned vessels exceeds \$30 million,” Frazier added. “Right now we don’t have a funding source to remove commercial vessels. AB 2441 will

create a stable funding source that county marine patrols, state agencies and other entities can use to clear our waterways of this blight."

AB 2441 would direct rental income from surface uses for lands in the Delta for deposit in the Delta Abandoned Vessel Removal Account. The State Lands Commission would administer the account and work with the appropriate agencies for vessel removal.

AB 2441 is supported by the Delta Counties Coalition and the counties of Contra Costa, Solano and Yolo.

"The Contra Costa County Office of the Sheriff is excited to be working in close coordination with Assemblymember Frazier's Office on this important piece of legislation to ensure that Delta Waterways are clean and safe for the use of all Californians," said Lt. David Cook, Commander of the Sheriff Marine Services Unit.

Elected officials from Assembly District 11, marine law enforcement officials and boating advocacy groups spoke in support of AB 2441 at the Committee hearing where the bill was heard. The Committee members from both sides of the aisle voted 7-0 to approve the bill. AB 2441 now goes to the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

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Assemblymember Frazier represents the 11th Assembly District, which includes the communities of Antioch, Bethel Island, Birds Landing, Brentwood, Byron, Collinsville, Discovery Bay, Fairfield, Isleton, Knightsen, Locke, Oakley, Pittsburg (partial), Rio Vista, Suisun City, Travis AFB, Vacaville and Walnut Grove.

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