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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

### **sSB 426**

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING ABANDONED FISHING GEAR IN LONG ISLAND SOUND.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill allows the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner, or his representative, to seize derelict lobster gear. It requires the commissioner or his representative to try to notify the gear's last known licensee within 30 days after seizing it. If the gear goes unclaimed, its owner cannot be identified, or there is no identifying marker on it as required by law, the bill allows the commissioner to dispose of it. Existing law and regulations provide a similar authority.

Under the bill, "derelict lobster gear" means any lobster pot, trap, warp (a rope or lines used to connect gear), or live car (a container used to store caught lobster in the water) that does not have, as required, the (1) current Connecticut commercial license number branded on it and (2) current or previous year's trap tag attached to it.

Existing law, unchanged by the bill, allows the commissioner or his representative to seize and dispose of any lobster gear that is not branded with the Connecticut commercial license number (CGS § 26-157a). Thus, the existing law allows seizure of unmarked gear regardless of if there is a trap tag attached and without requiring notice to the last known licensee. Existing regulations also allow DEEP to seize and dispose of any lobster pot, trap, or similar device that has a defaced or obliterated license number (Conn. Agencies Regs. § 26-157c-2(f)).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2018

#### **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 29 Nay 0 (03/22/2018)