



CITY OF

NEWPORT BEACH

City Council Staff Report

October 28, 2025
Agenda Item No. 6

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Paul Blank, City Harbormaster - 949-270-8159,
pblank@newportbeachca.gov

PREPARED BY: Cynthia Shintaku, Management Analyst - 949-270-8159,
cshintaku@newportbeachca.gov

TITLE: Resolution No. 2025-69: Accepting a Grant from the State of California, Division of Boating and Waterways for the Surrendered and Abandoned Vessel Exchange Program

ABSTRACT:

The City of Newport Beach (City) applied for and has been awarded grant funding by the State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation, Division of Boating and Waterways for the Surrendered and Abandoned Vessel (SAVE) Exchange Program. Funding for this program will be used to remove and reduce abandoned and surrendered vessels in our waterways. For the City Council's consideration is a resolution to accept grant funds from the State of California.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a) Determine this action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) and 15060(c)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines because this action will not result in a physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly;
- b) Adopt Resolution No. 2025-69, *A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Newport Beach, California, Accepting a Grant from the State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation, Division of Boating and Waterways for the Surrendered and Abandoned Vessel Exchange Program (SAVE)*; and
- c) Approve Budget Amendment No. 26-029 recognizing \$100,000 in grant revenue from the California Division of Boating and Waterways (13501-431385-25H13) and appropriating \$100,000 to Account No. 13501-980000-25H13 and \$10,000 to Account No. 10001-980000-25H13 Abandoned Watercraft Abatement.

DISCUSSION:

Newport Harbor is one of the largest small-craft recreational harbors on the California Coastline and is a welcome port for many boaters as they cruise the Pacific Ocean or tour local waters. The City encourages public access to the water and offers slips and vacant moorings available to rent to both locals and visitors. With approximately 1,200 public moorings, the harbor also serves as home for a variety of permitted vessels.

While the majority of boaters and mooring permittees properly use the harbor, there are occasional issues of vessel abandonment, illegal berthing and derelict vessels. As a result, some vessels may face citations, impoundment or subsequent legal action (such as liens, junking and demolition). These vessels may pose on-the-water hazards and can be prone to discharges of oils, gas, sewage or other fluids; become platforms for wildlife to overrun; or worse, take on water and sink in the harbor. The City occasionally inherits these derelict and abandoned vessels, which results in disposal-related costs for the City, and as such, the City requires funding for proper disposal.

The SAVE program, formerly called the Abandoned Watercraft Abatement Fund and the Vessel Turn in Program, was enacted in 1998 and 2010. This program provides an efficient and cost-free alternative for boat owners to surrender an unwanted vessel to a participating agency in lieu of abandonment; it helps eliminate the expensive, difficult and time-consuming adjudication and removal process that abandoned vessels require.

Since 2014, the City has applied for and been awarded the SAVE Grant. Below is a chart that references the grant funding awarded, and number of vessels removed. The number of vessels removed from the program is determined by the size and condition of each vessel.

Grant Year	Award Amount	Vessels Removed
2014-2016	\$125,700	30
2017-2019	\$125,000	25
2019-2021	\$175,000	47
2021-2023	\$175,000	27
2023-2025	\$175,000	37

The Harbor Department has proactively educated mariners on the SAVE program encouraging individuals to turn in vessels they can no longer care for. All the vessels processed through this program are either decaying, nonoperational and/or a financial detriment to their owners.

Recognizing the need and interest in the program, in April 2025, the City re-applied for the next round of SAVE grant funding. In July 2025, the City was notified by the State that funding for the SAVE grant would be reduced from \$2 million to \$1 million. The maximum award amount for applicants would be up to \$100,000 or 10% of the grant. In September 2025, the City was awarded \$100,000 for the SAVE grant program.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Budget Amendment recognizes \$100,000 in grant revenue from the State Department of Boating and Waterways and \$110,000 in increased expenditure appropriations. This grant reimburses 90% of eligible SAVE grant expenditures, with the City providing a 10% match. This is a two-year grant program and will conclude on September 30, 2027.

The revenue will be posted to the Division of Boating and Waterways Contribution CIP fund account, 13501-4313855-25H13, and the services will be expensed to the Abandoned Watercraft Abatement CIP expenditure account, 13501-980000-25H13 and 1001-980000-25H13.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

Staff recommends the City Council find this action is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly.

NOTICING:

The agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the City Council considers the item).

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Resolution No. 2025-69
Attachment B – Budget Amendment