

HOUSE BILL 244

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(PRE-FILED)

6lr0138

CF SB 214

By: Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee (By Request – Departmental – Natural Resources)

Requested: September 26, 2025

Introduced and read first time: January 14, 2026

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Natural Resources – Vessel Transfers – Transfer-on-Death Beneficiary**
3 **Designation**

4 FOR the purpose of authorizing an individual who is the sole owner of a certain vessel to
5 apply to the Department of Natural Resources to designate a beneficiary to take
6 ownership of the vessel on the death of the owner; requiring a designated beneficiary
7 who survives the owner of a vessel to apply to the Department for a new certificate
8 of title for the vessel; requiring an application for a certificate of title for a vessel to
9 contain certain information; and generally relating to beneficiary designations for
10 vessels.

11 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
12 Article – Natural Resources
13 Section 8–715(e)
14 Annotated Code of Maryland
15 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

16 BY adding to
17 Article – Natural Resources
18 Section 8–720.1
19 Annotated Code of Maryland
20 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

21 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
22 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

23 **Article – Natural Resources**

24 8–715.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (e) (1) Every owner of a vessel subject to titling under the provisions of this
2 subtitle shall apply to the Department for issuance of a certificate of title for the vessel
3 within 30 days after acquisition.

4 (2) The application shall [be]:

5 (I) BE on forms the Department prescribes, and accompanied by the
6 required fee and tax[. The application shall be];

7 (II) BE signed and sworn to before a notary public or other person
8 who administers oaths, or a certification signed in writing containing substantially the
9 representation that statements made are true and correct to the best of the applicant's
10 knowledge, information, and belief, under penalty of perjury[. The application shall
11 contain];

12 (III) CONTAIN the date of sale and gross price of the vessel or the fair
13 market value if no sale immediately preceded the transfer[,];

14 (IV) IF THE SOLE INDIVIDUAL OWNER OF A VESSEL DESIGNATES
15 A TRANSFER-ON-DEATH BENEFICIARY UNDER § 8-720.1 OF THIS SUBTITLE,
16 INCLUDE THE NAME AND MAILING ADDRESS OF THE BENEFICIARY; and [any]

17 (V) CONTAIN ANY additional information the Department requires.

18 (3) If the application is made for a vessel last previously registered or titled
19 in another state or foreign country, the application shall contain this information and any
20 other the Department requires.

21 8-720.1.

22 (A) IN THIS SECTION, "VESSEL" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN § 8-716 OF
23 THIS SUBTITLE.

24 (B) AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS THE SOLE OWNER OF A VESSEL MAY APPLY TO
25 THE DEPARTMENT TO DESIGNATE A BENEFICIARY TO TAKE OWNERSHIP OF THE
26 VESSEL ON THE DEATH OF THE OWNER.

27 (C) THE DESIGNATION OF A BENEFICIARY MAY BE SHOWN BY THE WORDS
28 "TRANSFER-ON-DEATH" OR THE ABBREVIATION "TOD" AFTER THE NAME OF THE
29 REGISTERED OWNER ON A CERTIFICATE OF TITLE.

30 (D) (1) THE DESIGNATION OF A BENEFICIARY FOR A VESSEL DOES NOT
31 AFFECT THE OWNERSHIP OF THE VESSEL UNTIL THE DEATH OF THE OWNER OF THE
32 VESSEL.

1 **(2) THE OWNER OF A VESSEL MAY CANCEL OR CHANGE THE**
2 **DESIGNATION OF A BENEFICIARY AT ANY TIME WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE**
3 **BENEFICIARY BY APPLYING TO THE DEPARTMENT.**

4 **(E) THE DESIGNATION OF A BENEFICIARY IS NOT REQUIRED TO BE**
5 **SUPPORTED BY CONSIDERATION, AND THE CERTIFICATE OF TITLE OF THE VESSEL**
6 **FOR WHICH THE DESIGNATION IS MADE IS NOT REQUIRED TO BE DELIVERED TO THE**
7 **BENEFICIARY IN ORDER FOR THE DESIGNATION TO BE EFFECTIVE.**

8 **(F) ON THE DEATH OF THE OWNER OF A VESSEL WHO HAS DESIGNATED A**
9 **BENEFICIARY, OWNERSHIP OF THE VESSEL SHALL PASS TO THE BENEFICIARY IF THE**
10 **BENEFICIARY SURVIVES THE OWNER.**

11 **(G) (1) A DESIGNATED BENEFICIARY WHO SURVIVES THE OWNER SHALL**
12 **APPLY TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR A NEW CERTIFICATE OF TITLE FOR THE VESSEL.**

13 **(2) AN APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF TITLE BY A BENEFICIARY**
14 **FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF THE OWNER SHALL INCLUDE:**

15 **(I) THE ORIGINAL CERTIFICATE OF TITLE DESIGNATING THE**
16 **BENEFICIARY;**

17 **(II) A DEATH CERTIFICATE FOR THE DECEASED OWNER;**

18 **(III) PROOF OF THE IDENTITY OF THE BENEFICIARY; AND**

19 **(IV) ANY APPLICABLE TAXES OR FEES.**

20 **(H) IF A DESIGNATED BENEFICIARY DOES NOT SURVIVE THE DEATH OF THE**
21 **OWNER, THE VESSEL IS PART OF THE ESTATE OF THE DECEASED OWNER.**

22 **(I) THIS SECTION DOES NOT LIMIT THE RIGHTS OF CREDITORS OF VESSEL**
23 **OWNERS AGAINST BENEFICIARIES AND OTHER TRANSFEREES UNDER OTHER LAWS**
24 **OF THIS STATE.**

25 **(J) THE DEPARTMENT MAY CHARGE A FEE, NOT TO EXCEED THE COSTS TO**
26 **THE DEPARTMENT, FOR ISSUING A CERTIFICATE OF TITLE UNDER THIS SECTION.**

27 **(K) THE DEPARTMENT MAY ADOPT REGULATIONS TO CARRY OUT THIS**
28 **SECTION.**

29 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
30 October 1, 2026.