

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 831

S.P. 361

In Senate, March 4, 2025

An Act Regarding Abandoned Vehicles Due to Involuntary Psychiatric Hospitalization

Reference to the Committee on Transportation suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D M Grant'.

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator MOORE of Washington.
Cosponsored by Representatives: ANKELES of Brunswick, CRAFTS of Newcastle,
GRAHAM of North Yarmouth, MCCABE of Lewiston.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 29-A MRSA §1857-A** is enacted to read:

3 **§1857-A. Disposition of vehicle when owner is involuntarily hospitalized**

4 **1. Abandonment; involuntary hospitalization.** Notwithstanding section 1852, if the
5 owner of the premises where a vehicle described in section 1851 is located or the owner's
6 agent has been notified that the vehicle owner is hospitalized pursuant to the process set
7 forth in Title 34-B, chapter 3, subchapter 4, article 3, the vehicle is considered abandoned
8 if the owner or lienholder does not retrieve and pay all reasonable charges for towing,
9 storing and authorized repair of the vehicle within 120 days after the notices to the owner
10 and lienholder are sent by the Secretary of State or 120 days after the advertisement is
11 published as required in section 1854, subsection 4. There is a rebuttable presumption that
12 the last owner of record of a vehicle found abandoned as shown in the files of the office of
13 the Secretary of State is the vehicle owner at the time it was abandoned and the person who
14 abandoned it.

15 **2. Notification of vehicle owner.** The owner of the premises where a vehicle described
16 in section 1851 is located, or the owner's agent, shall include any notice described in
17 subsection 1 in the notice required pursuant to section 1854.

18 **3. Change of ownership.** Notwithstanding section 1856, the Secretary of State may
19 not issue a letter of ownership or certificate of title until at least 120 days after the date on
20 which the person who has possession of and control over the vehicle notified the Secretary
21 of State by complying with section 1854, subsection 1 or 1-A and section 1854, subsection
22 2.

23 **4. Limits.** Notwithstanding section 1857, if the vehicle owner has provided notice
24 pursuant to subsection 1, the daily total storage charges must be reasonable and total storage
25 charges may not exceed:

26 A. Six hundred dollars for the initial 30-day period; and

27 B. Fifteen hundred dollars for each subsequent 30-day period.

28 **5. Notification of involuntary hospitalization.** For purposes of this section, a notice
29 of involuntary hospitalization may be provided in writing by:

30 A. The hospital; or

31 B. The vehicle owner or another individual authorized by the vehicle owner with
32 supporting documentation of involuntary hospitalization.

33 **SUMMARY**

34 This bill allows a period of 120 days before the Secretary of State determines that a
35 vehicle is abandoned if the vehicle owner is involuntarily hospitalized. The notification of
36 involuntary hospitalization, which must be provided to the Secretary to State, may come
37 from the owner of the vehicle, the hospital or another person authorized by the owner of
38 the vehicle. The bill prohibits the Secretary of State from issuing a letter of ownership or
39 certificate of title until at least 120 days after the date on which the owner of the premises
40 where a vehicle has been abandoned, or the owner's agent, has been notified that the vehicle
41 owner is involuntarily hospitalized. The bill also reduces the total storage charges to \$600

1 for the first 30 days of storage and specifies the total storage charges may not exceed \$1,500
2 for each subsequent 30-day period.