

**TITLE 19 - CUSTOMS DUTIES**  
**CHAPTER 4 - TARIFF ACT OF 1930**  
**SUBTITLE III - ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS**  
**Part V - Enforcement Provisions**

**§ 1616a. Disposition of forfeited property**

**(a) State proceedings**

The Secretary of the Treasury may discontinue forfeiture proceedings under this chapter in favor of forfeiture under State law. If a complaint for forfeiture is filed under this chapter, the Attorney General may seek dismissal of the complaint in favor of forfeiture under State law.

**(b) Transfer of seized property; notice**

If forfeiture proceedings are discontinued or dismissed under this section—

- (1) the United States may transfer the seized property to the appropriate State or local official; and
- (2) notice of the discontinuance or dismissal shall be provided to all known interested parties.

**(c) Retention or transfer of forfeited property**

(1) The Secretary of the Treasury may apply property forfeited under this chapter in accordance with subparagraph (A) or (B), or both:

- (A) Retain any of the property for official use.
- (B) Transfer any of the property to—
  - (i) any other Federal agency;
  - (ii) any State or local law enforcement agency that participated directly or indirectly in the seizure or forfeiture of the property; or
  - (iii) the Civil Air Patrol.

(2) The Secretary may transfer any forfeited personal property or the proceeds of the sale of any forfeited personal or real property to any foreign country which participated directly or indirectly in the seizure or forfeiture of the property, if such a transfer—

- (A) has been agreed to by the Secretary of State;
- (B) is authorized in an international agreement between the United States and the foreign country; and
- (C) is made to a country which, if applicable, has been certified under section 2291j (b) of title 22.

(3) Aircraft may be transferred to the Civil Air Patrol under paragraph (1)(B)(iii) in support of air search and rescue and other emergency services and, pursuant to a memorandum of understanding entered into with a Federal agency, illegal drug traffic surveillance. Jet-powered aircraft may not be transferred to the Civil Air Patrol under the authority of paragraph (1)(B)(iii).

**(d) Liability of United States after transfer**

The United States shall not be liable in any action relating to property transferred under this section if such action is based on an act or omission occurring after the transfer.

(June 17, 1930, ch. 497, title IV, § 616, as added Pub. L. 98–573, title II, § 213(a)(14), Oct. 30, 1984, 98 Stat. 2987; amended Pub. L. 99–570, title I, § 1863(a), Oct. 27, 1986, 100 Stat. 3207–54; Pub. L. 100–690, title VII, § 7366(a), Nov. 18, 1988, 102 Stat. 4478; Pub. L. 101–207, § 3(e), Dec. 7, 1989, 103 Stat. 1834; Pub. L. 103–447, title I, § 102(c), Nov. 2, 1994, 108 Stat. 4693.)

**Codification**

Another section 616 of act June 17, 1930, as added by Pub. L. 98–473, title II, § 318, Oct. 12, 1984, 98 Stat. 2055, was classified to section 1616 of this title and subsequently repealed.

## Amendments

1994—Subsec. (c)(2)(C). Pub. L. 103–447 substituted “section 2291j (b) of title 22” for “section 2291 (h) of title 22”.

1989—Subsec. (c)(1)(B). Pub. L. 101–207, § 3(e)(1), amended subpar. (B) generally. Prior to amendment, subpar. (B) read as follows: “Transfer any of the property to any—

“(i) other Federal agency; or

“(ii) State or local law enforcement agency that participated directly or indirectly in the seizure or forfeiture of the property.”

Subsec. (c)(3). Pub. L. 101–207, § 3(e)(2), added par. (3).

1988—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 100–690 amended subsec. (c) generally. Prior to amendment, subsec. (c) read as follows: “The Secretary of the Treasury may transfer any property forfeited under this chapter to any other Federal agency or to any State or local law enforcement agency which participated directly in the seizure or forfeiture of the property.”

1986—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 99–570 inserted “any other Federal agency or to” after “property forfeited under this chapter to”.

## Effective Date of 1988 Amendment

Section 7366(b) of Pub. L. 100–690 provided that: “The amendment made by subsection (a) [amending this section] applies with respect to property forfeited under the Tariff Act of 1930 [this chapter] on or after the date of the enactment of this Act [Nov. 18, 1988].”

## Effective Date

Section effective Oct. 15, 1984, see section 214(e) of Pub. L. 98–573, set out as an Effective Date of 1984 Amendment note under section 1304 of this title.