

**CITY OF SANTA BARBARA WATERFRONT
DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM**

Date: March 19, 2015
To: Harbor Commission
From: Scott Riedman, Waterfront Director
Subject: Harbor Operations Report

PANGA INTERDICTION

At 9:30 a.m. on February 16, 2015, Harbor Patrol was informed of a panga being towed toward Santa Barbara Harbor from Tajiguas Beach by a fishing boat whose operator claimed the panga was his to salvage, per Maritime Salvage Law. Harbor Patrol, Santa Barbara Police and Homeland Security (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) departed the harbor aboard Patrol Boat #2 (PB #2), to intercept the two vessels and relieve the fishing boat of the tow. It was determined that interdiction was necessary after a report that another boat was meeting with the commercial vessel and the panga at a location offshore of Devereux Point. A Sheriff's helicopter helped direct Harbor Patrol and a 45' Coast Guard vessel to the area.

Harbor Patrol contacted the commercial fisherman off of Mesa Lane towing the 30' Panga (no contraband or people on board). The fisherman, however, refused to turn over the Panga, citing Maritime Salvage Law as his right to claim the abandoned vessel. Harbor Patrol followed the fishing boat and panga toward the harbor. Meanwhile, a Coast Guard vessel arrived on scene off the Santa Barbara Yacht Club and boarded the commercial vessel and performed a Safety Inspection. At noon, the vessel towing the Panga entered the harbor and docked at the Launch Ramp. The operator said he had a trailer arranged to remove the Panga from the water. Homeland Security provided the ill-informed fisherman with their authority code to seize the boat, though the fisherman continued to insist on his salvage rights. At 2:00 p.m., Santa Barbara Sheriffs arrived on scene arrested, cited and released the fisherman for obstructing an investigation, then took possession of the panga, which was subsequently removed from the area.

Prepared by: Mick Kronman, Harbor Operations Manager