

# Big Barge May Get Off Tax Hook

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors will decide next week whether it should cancel \$660,196 in back property tax bills levied on the Howard Hughes-CIA submersible barge in Redwood City, it was announced yesterday.

The tax bills were sent to Lockheed Missiles and Space Co. of Sunnyvale — the barge's ostensible owner — last June after disclosures that the barge's massive claw fished up part of a Russian sub for the CIA.

Until then, the barge had been taxed by San Mateo county at only

one per cent of its market value because it was supposedly built by Hughes exclusively for oceanic research.

The county contended that the salvage use of the barge entitled San Mateo to tax it at 25 per cent of its value.

Now, attorneys for Lockheed have submitted affidavits to the county that state the U.S. government was always the owner of the barge.

For "purposes of secrecy and cover," a Lockheed affidavit said,

"Lockheed, at the direction of the U.S. government, represented that it was the owner of the barge in question.

"However, at all times the U.S. government was the owner and was in control of the property, and directed all of Lockheed's activities

...."  
In a letter to the board of supervisors yesterday, San Mateo County District Attorney Keith Sorenson recommended that the supervisors consider the barge's back tax bills for 1973, 74 and 75 during an executive session this Tuesday.