

Committee on Environmental Preservation and Conservation

CS/CS/HB 1211 — Airboat Regulation

by Commerce Committee; Careers and Competition Subcommittee; and Rep. Abruzzo and others (CS/CS/SB 1612 by Appropriations Committee; Environmental Preservation and Conservation Committee; and Senators Rader and Book)

The bill creates “Ellie’s Law” to prohibit, beginning July 1, 2019, a person from operating an airboat to carry passengers for hire on waters of the state unless he or she has all of the following onboard the airboat:

- A photographic identification card.
- Proof of completion of a boating safety education course, regardless of the established exemptions, except as otherwise provided.
- Proof of successful completion of a commission?approved airboat operator course that meets the minimum standards established by the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) rule.
- Proof of successful course completion in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first aid.

A person issued a captain’s license by the United States Coast Guard is not required to complete the boating safety education course. However, proof of such captain’s license is required to be onboard the airboat when carrying passengers for hire on waters of the state.

The bill provides that a person who violates these airboat operating provisions commits a second degree misdemeanor, punishable by up to 60 days imprisonment or a \$500 fine.

The bill requires the FWC to adopt rules to implement the airboat operating requirements no later than October 1, 2018.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 34-1; House 114-0