

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

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BILL: CS/SB 1432

INTRODUCER: Environment and Natural Resources Committee and Senator Rodriguez

SUBJECT: Vessel Anchoring

DATE: January 18, 2022

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Carroll	Rogers	EN	<b>Fav/CS</b>
2.			CA	
3.			RC	

**Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:**

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

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**I. Summary:**

CS/SB 1432 amends statutes relating to vessel anchoring and mooring. The bill provides that approved and permitted moorings or mooring fields in Monroe County have a 10 year limit on general tenancies and that a sovereign submerged land or other proprietary lease may not prohibit a vessel from an approved and permitted mooring or mooring field, or limit the tenancy of a vessel, because it is an established domicile or a primary residence.

The bill clarifies that Monroe County is designated as an anchoring limitation area in which vessels anchored on waters of the state within the county and within 10 linear nautical miles of a public mooring field or designated anchoring area must:

- Pull anchor,
- Move under their own power, and
- Re-anchor a certain distance away or in a different designated anchoring area.

This must occur at least once every 90 days. The requirement does not apply to vessels moored to approved and permitted moorings, or to domiciled vessels on the waters of the state within the county, until at least 100 new moorings are available for public use within 1 mile of Key West Bight City Dock. The bill removes the provisions requiring the county to approve of a certain number of moorings at certain locations.

The bill requires the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to consult with Monroe County and the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary to establish designated anchoring areas throughout the county that meet certain criteria.

The bill requires certain vessels on the waters of the state within Monroe County that are equipped with a marine sanitation device to maintain a record of the date and location of each pump-out of the device, which must occur every 30 days, for one year after the date of the pump-out.

## II. Present Situation:

### Sovereign Submerged Lands

Sovereign submerged lands are owned by the state and include, but are not limited to, tidal lands, islands, sandbars, shallow banks, and lands waterward of the ordinary or mean high water line,<sup>1</sup> beneath navigable fresh water or tidally-influenced waters.<sup>2</sup> Under the Florida Constitution, the title to all sovereign submerged lands is held by the state in trust for the people.<sup>3</sup> The public generally has the right to use sovereign submerged lands for traditional recreational purposes such as swimming, boating, and fishing.<sup>4</sup>

The Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, comprised of the Governor and Cabinet, holds title to all sovereign submerged lands in the state.<sup>5</sup> Chapter 18-21 of the Florida Administrative Code lists the various forms of authorization necessary for specified activities on sovereign submerged lands, including submerged land leases.<sup>6</sup>

Rule 18-21.0041 specifically addresses leases, easements, or consent to use sovereignty submerged lands in Monroe County for multi-slip docking facilities.<sup>7</sup> Certain general policies and specific criteria must be considered in determining whether to allow the use of sovereignty submerged lands for multi-slip docking facilities.<sup>8</sup> The general policies include:

- Taking into account the proximity to and potential adverse impacts on any rare, threatened, or endangered species, or species of special concern, or their habitat, or on any portion of the Florida Reef Tract and other corals;
- Eliminating any adverse impacts on wetland or submerged vegetation or benthic communities;
- Maintaining or enhancing water quality;

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<sup>1</sup> Fla. Admin. Code R. 18-21.003(67). The mean high water line is the point on the shore marking the average height of the high waters over a 19-year period, and it is the boundary between the state-owned foreshore (land alternately covered and uncovered by the tide) and the dry area above the mean high water line that is subject to private ownership. *See ss.* 177.27(14), (15) and 177.28(1), F.S.

<sup>2</sup> Fla. Admin. Code R. 18-21.003(67).

<sup>3</sup> FLA. CONST. art. X, s. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Fla. Admin. Code R. 18-21.004(2)(a); *see also 5F, LLC v. Hawthorne*, 317 So. 3d 220, 223 (Fla. 2d DCA 2021) (identifying the same traditional uses).

<sup>5</sup> Sections 253.03 and 253.12(1), F.S.

<sup>6</sup> *See* Fla. Admin. Code R. 18-21.005.

<sup>7</sup> A multi-slip docking facility is a marina or dock designed to moor three or more vessels. Fla. Admin. Code R. 18-20.003(41).

<sup>8</sup> Fla. Admin. Code R. 18-20.003.

- Requiring adequate water depths to avoid dredging and other bottom disturbance;
- Requiring consistency and conformity with local government land use plans, zoning, and other land use or development regulations; and
- Requiring consistency and conformity with the Principles for Guiding Development in the Florida Keys Area of Critical State Concern.<sup>9</sup>

The specific criteria include:

- A moratorium on the approval of all leases of state owned submerged lands for multi-slip docking facilities from Tea Table Channel north to the Monroe County Line;
- No docking facilities that require either dredging or filling to provide access;
- Water depth requirements;
- Requirements for the size of the dock;
- For any new or expanded docking facility for 10 or more boats, a specific lease condition that the lessee shall maintain water quality standards;
- An application review for new docking facilities or expansions to existing facilities to identify ways to improve, mitigate or restore adverse environmental impacts caused by previous activities;
- A lease requirement for all applicants proposing docking facilities designed to moor 10 or more boats;
- Documentation from all applicants to show that there is an economic demand for the number of boat slips requested;
- No benthic communities present where the boat mooring area, turning basins, mooring piles, or other structures are to be located, excepting any main access docks required to cross benthic communities to reach acceptable areas; and
- Special consideration for certain projects to further the commercial fishing village or commercial fishing enterprise zone concept.<sup>10</sup>

### **Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission**

The Division of Law Enforcement Boating and Waterways Section of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) oversees and coordinates statewide regulatory waterway markers to ensure compliance with uniform markers and state boating and resource protection zones for the benefit of all waterway users and fish and wildlife resources in the state.<sup>11</sup> The Boating and Waterways Section takes public input and provides notice of proposed local boating-restricted areas.<sup>12</sup>

FWC's boating laws are enforced by the Division of Law Enforcement and its officers, county sheriffs and deputies, municipal police officers, and any other law enforcement officer.<sup>13</sup> The

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<sup>9</sup> Fla. Admin. Code R. 18-20.003(2).

<sup>10</sup> Fla. Admin. Code R. 18-20.003(3).

<sup>11</sup> FWC, *Waterway Management*, <https://myfwc.com/boating/waterway/> (last visited Jan. 11, 2022).

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> Section 327.70(1), F.S.; *see s.* 943.10(1), F.S., which defines "law enforcement officer" as any person who is elected, appointed, or employed full time by any municipality or the state or any political subdivision thereof; who is vested with authority to bear arms and make arrests; and whose primary responsibility is the prevention and detection of crime or the enforcement of the penal, criminal, traffic, or highway laws of the state. The definition also includes all certified supervisory and command personnel whose duties include, in whole or in part, the supervision, training, guidance, and management

Division of Law Enforcement manages the state's waterways to ensure boating safety for residents of and visitors to the state.<sup>14</sup> This includes enforcing boating rules and regulations; coordinating boating safety campaigns and education; managing public waters and access to the waters; conducting boating accident investigations; identifying and removing derelict vessels; and investigating vessel theft and title fraud.<sup>15</sup>

### **Anchoring or Mooring**

Anchoring or mooring refers to a boater's practice of seeking and using a safe harbor on the public waterway system for an undefined duration. Anchoring is accomplished using an anchor carried on the vessel.<sup>16</sup> Mooring is accomplished through the use of moorings permanently affixed to the bottom of the water body. Anchorages are areas that boaters regularly use for anchoring or mooring, whether designated or managed for that purpose or not. Mooring fields are areas designated and used for a system of properly spaced moorings.<sup>17</sup>

### **Local Regulation of Anchoring or Mooring of Vessels**

Local governments are authorized by general permit to construct, operate, and maintain public mooring fields, each for up to 100 vessels.<sup>18</sup> Mooring fields must be located where navigational access already exists between the mooring field and the nearest customarily used access channel or navigable waters that the mooring field is designed to serve. Each mooring field must be associated with a land-based support facility that provides amenities and conveniences, such as parking, bathrooms, showers, and laundry facilities. Major boat repairs and maintenance, fueling activities other than from the land-based support facility, and boat hull scraping and painting are not authorized within mooring fields.<sup>19</sup>

Local governments are authorized to enact and enforce ordinances that prohibit or restrict the mooring or anchoring of floating structures<sup>20</sup> or live-aboard vessels<sup>21</sup> within their jurisdictions and vessels that are within the marked boundaries of permitted mooring fields.<sup>22</sup> However, local governments are prohibited from enacting, continuing in effect, or enforcing any ordinance or

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responsibilities of full-time law enforcement officers, part-time law enforcement officers, or auxiliary law enforcement officers but does not include support personnel employed by the employing agency.

<sup>14</sup> Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), *Boating*, <https://myfwc.com/boating/> (last visited Jan. 11, 2022).

<sup>15</sup> FWC, *Law Enforcement*, <https://myfwc.com/about/inside-fwc/le/> (last visited Jan. 11, 2022). See s. 327.70(1) and (4), F.S.

<sup>16</sup> Section 327.02, F.S., defines the term "vessel" to include every description of watercraft, barge, and airboat, other than a seaplane on the water, used or capable of being used as a means of transportation on water.

<sup>17</sup> Ankersen, Hamann, & Flagg, *Anchoring Away: Government Regulation and the Rights of Navigation in Florida*, 2 (Rev. May 2012), available at [https://www.flseagrant.org/wp-content/uploads/anchoring\\_away\\_5\\_12\\_update\\_web.pdf](https://www.flseagrant.org/wp-content/uploads/anchoring_away_5_12_update_web.pdf) (last visited Jan. 11, 2022).

<sup>18</sup> See s. 373.118, F.S., and Fla. Admin. Code R. 62-330.420(1).

<sup>19</sup> See Fla. Admin. Code R. 62-330.420.

<sup>20</sup> Section 327.02, F.S., defines the term "floating structure" as a "floating entity, with or without accommodations built thereon, which is not primarily used as a means of transportation on water but which serves purposes or provides services typically associated with a structure or other improvement to real property. The term includes an entity used as a residence, place of business, or office with public access; a hotel or motel; a restaurant or lounge; a clubhouse; a meeting facility; a storage or parking facility; or a mining platform, dredge, dragline, or similar facility or entity represented as such."

<sup>21</sup> Section 327.02, F.S., defines the term "live-aboard vessel" as "a vessel used solely as a residence and not for navigation; a vessel for which a declaration of domicile has been filed; or a vessel used as a residence that does not have an effective means of propulsion for safe navigation. The definition expressly excludes commercial fishing boats."

<sup>22</sup> Section 327.60(3), F.S.

local regulation that regulates the anchoring of vessels, other than live-aboard vessels and non-fishing commercial vessels, outside the marked boundaries of permitted mooring fields.<sup>23</sup>

### ***Anchoring Limitation Areas***

State law designates certain densely populated urban areas as anchoring limitation areas.<sup>24</sup> These areas usually have narrow state waterways, residential docking facilities, and significant recreational boating traffic.<sup>25</sup> Counties may create more anchoring limitation areas under certain circumstances.<sup>26</sup>

In 2021, Monroe County was designated as an anchoring limitation area within which a vessel on waters of the state may only be anchored in the same location for a maximum of 90 days.<sup>27</sup> FWC adopts rules to implement this.<sup>28</sup> Notwithstanding FWC's rules, this limitation is only effective for Monroe County until the county approves, permits, and opens new moorings for public use, including at least 250 moorings within 1 mile of the Key West Bight City Dock and at least 50 moorings within the Key West Garrison Bight Mooring Field.<sup>29</sup>

The following are some exceptions that allow anchoring in an anchoring limitation area:

- When a vessel suffers a mechanical failure that poses an unreasonable risk of harm to the vessel or the persons onboard unless the vessel anchors;
- If imminent or existing weather conditions in the vicinity of the vessel pose an unreasonable risk of harm to the vessel or the persons onboard unless the vessel anchors;
- During certain special events;<sup>30</sup> or
- Certain government, construction, and fishing vessels.<sup>31</sup>

Law enforcement officers or agencies may remove and impound, for up to 48 hours, vessels from anchoring limitation areas when a vessel operator who was previously issued a citation:

- Continues to anchor the vessel in an anchoring limitation area within 12 hours of being issued a citation; or
- Refuses to leave the anchoring limitation area after being directed to do so by a law enforcement officer or agency.<sup>32</sup>

In addition to the civil penalty imposed by a citation, a vessel operator whose vessel has been impounded must pay all of the applicable removal and storage fees before the vessel is released.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Section 327.60(2)(f), F.S.

<sup>24</sup> Section 327.4108(1), F.S.

<sup>25</sup> *Id.*

<sup>26</sup> *Id.*; Section 327.4108(2), F.S.

<sup>27</sup> Section 327.4108(3), F.S.

<sup>28</sup> *Id.*

<sup>29</sup> *Id.*

<sup>30</sup> Section 327.4108(3), F.S.; *see also* s. 327.48, F.S.

<sup>31</sup> Section 327.4108(4), F.S.

<sup>32</sup> Section 327.4108(5), F.S.

<sup>33</sup> *Id.*

An owner or operator of a vessel who anchors in an anchoring limitation area commits a noncriminal infraction and is subject to a uniform boating citation and penalties. The civil penalty provided is up to a maximum of:

- \$50 for a first offense;
- \$100 for a second offense; and
- \$250 for a third or subsequent offense.<sup>34</sup>

Section 327.73(1) F.S., provides that any person who fails to appear or otherwise properly respond to a uniform boating citation must, in addition to the charge relating to the violation of the boating laws, be charged with a second degree misdemeanor, which is punishable by a maximum fine of \$500 and no more than 60 days imprisonment.<sup>35</sup>

### **Marine Sanitation Devices**

A marine sanitation device is equipment, other than a toilet, for installation on board a vessel which is designed to receive, retain, treat, or discharge sewage, and any process to treat such sewage.<sup>36</sup> The U.S. Coast Guard categorizes marine sanitation devices into three types:

- Type I devices are flow-through treatment devices that commonly use maceration and disinfection for the treatment of sewage;
- Type II devices are flow-through treatment devices that may employ biological treatment and disinfection;
- Type III devices are typically a holding tank where sewage is stored until it can be discharged shore-side or at sea (beyond three miles from shore).<sup>37</sup>

Raw sewage cannot be discharged from any vessel or any floating structure in Florida waters.<sup>38</sup> All waste from Type III marine sanitation devices must be disposed of in an approved sewage pump-out facility.<sup>39</sup> A violation of the marine sanitation laws is a noncriminal infraction.<sup>40</sup>

### **No-Discharge Zones**

A no-discharge zone is a designated body of water that prohibits the discharge of treated and untreated boat sewage.<sup>41</sup> Within the boundaries of a no-discharge zone, vessel operators are required to retain their sewage discharges onboard for discharge at sea (beyond three miles from the Atlantic shore and beyond nine miles from the Gulf shore) or onshore at a pump-out facility.

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<sup>34</sup> Section 327.73(1)(z), F.S.

<sup>35</sup> Sections 775.082 and 775.083, F.S.

<sup>36</sup> Section 327.02, F.S.

<sup>37</sup> EPA, *Marine Sanitation Devices (MSDs)*, <https://www.epa.gov/vessels-marinas-and-ports/marine-sanitation-devices-msds> (last visited Jan. 11, 2022).

<sup>38</sup> Section 327.53(4), F.S.

<sup>39</sup> *Id.*

<sup>40</sup> Section 327.53(6)(a), F.S.

<sup>41</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *Vessel Sewage Discharges: No-Discharge Zones*, <https://www.epa.gov/vessels-marinas-and-ports/vessel-sewage-no-discharge-zones> (last visited Jan. 12, 2022).

Currently, Florida has three designated no-discharge zones. They are Destin Harbor,<sup>42</sup> the city of Key West waters,<sup>43</sup> and the state waters within the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.<sup>44</sup>

### III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

**Section 1** amends s. 253.0346, F.S., to provide that notwithstanding any other law, all of the following conditions apply for approved and permitted moorings or mooring fields in Monroe County:

- The general tenancy on a mooring may exceed 12 months, if requested, but not 10 years.
- A sovereign submerged land or other proprietary lease may not prohibit a vessel from an approved and permitted mooring or mooring field or limit a vessel's tenancy because it is a domicile or primary residence.

**Section 2** amends s. 327.4108, F.S., to clarify that Monroe County is designated as an anchoring limitation area within which no less than once every 90 days each vessel anchored within Monroe County on waters of the state within 10 linear nautical miles of a public mooring field or a designated anchoring area must pull anchor, be moved from its location using the vessel's propulsion system,<sup>45</sup> and be re-anchored in a new location. The bill provides that the location must be:

- No less than one-half linear nautical mile from the vessel's starting location. A vessel may not be re-anchored within one-half linear nautical mile from the vessel's starting location for at least 90 days; or
- In a different designated anchoring area. A vessel may not be re-anchored in its originating designated anchoring area for at least 90 days after anchoring within a new designated anchoring area.

This relocation requirement does not apply to:

- Vessels moored to approved and permitted moorings and
- Vessels for which domicile has been established, until at least 100 new moorings are available for public use within one mile of the Key West Bight City Dock.

The changes above replace the following provisions:

- Anchoring limitations do not apply to mooring fields; and
- Anchoring limitations are not effective for Monroe County until the county approves, permits, and opens new moorings, including at least 250 moorings within one mile of the Key West Bight City Dock and at least 50 moorings in the Key West Garrison Bight Mooring Field.

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<sup>42</sup> Marine Sanitation Device Standard for Destin Harbor, 53 Fed. Reg. 1,678 (Jan. 21, 1988).

<sup>43</sup> City of Key West No Discharge Zone Determination, 64 Fed. Reg. 46,390 (Aug. 25, 1999).

<sup>44</sup> Regulation to Establish a No Discharge Zone for State Waters within the Boundary of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, 67 FR 35735 (May 21, 2002). The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary protects the 3,800 square miles of waters surrounding the Florida Keys from Miami to the Tortugas. NOAA, *Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Boundary*, <https://floridakeys.noaa.gov/about/welcome.html?s=about> (last visited Jan. 12, 2022).

<sup>45</sup> "Effective means of propulsion for safe navigation" means a vessel, other than a barge, that is equipped with: a functioning motor, controls, and steering system; or rigging and sails that are present and in good working order, and a functioning steering system. Section 327.02(13), F.S.

The bill replaces the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC's) existing rulemaking authority with the requirement that FWC, in consultation with Monroe County and the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, establish by rule designated anchoring areas throughout the county. The designated anchoring areas must:

- Specify a maximum vessel draft for each area;
- Be created only in locations where the water depth is sufficient to allow vessels whose drafts are less than the area's specified maximum vessel draft to navigate the areas without grounding or stranding;
- Not be located over coral reefs or other sensitive fish or wildlife habitat, to the maximum extent practicable, as determined by FWC;
- Not be located in an area subject to ongoing hazardous water currents or tides or containing navigational hazards; and
- Not be located within navigational channels, setbacks established by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers associated with federal channels, areas where anchoring is prohibited, or any other lawfully established areas that prohibit anchoring.

The bill provides that all of the following vessels within Monroe County on waters of the state which are equipped with a marine sanitation device, other than a marine composting toilet, that processes and manages human waste using technologies that comply with U.S. Coast Guard requirements must maintain a record of the date and location of each pump-out of the marine sanitation device, which must occur every 30 days, for one year after the date of the pump-out:

- A vessel that has enclosed living spaces or rooms and is used by a person as a dwelling or living space overnight at any time, notwithstanding whether the vessel is also used for navigation; and
- A vessel moored in a public mooring field.

**Section 3** provides an effective date of July 1, 2022.

#### **IV. Constitutional Issues:**

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.



**E. Other Constitutional Issues:**

A general law operates universally throughout the state, uniformly on specific subjects throughout the state, or uniformly within a permissible classification, or relates to a state function or entity.<sup>46</sup> Uniform operation of a general law does not require application throughout the state; instead there must be a reasonable possibility that others in the future may meet the criteria of the classification.<sup>47</sup> A general law of local application is a form of general law that operates within only a portion of the state due to a valid classification based on proper distinctions and differences.<sup>48</sup> Article III, Section 10 of the Florida Constitution does not place any burdens or requirements on the Legislature's ability to pass a general law of local application.

A special law is a law that operates on a specific category of people or subjects, and the classification is impermissible or illegal.<sup>49</sup> A special law requires prior publication of a notice of intent to seek passage, or it may become effective after approval by the affected voters in a referendum.<sup>50</sup> A local law is a form of special law that operates only in a specific geographic area or in a classified territory when classification is impermissible or illegal.<sup>51</sup>

The bill amends statutes relating to vessel anchoring and mooring and documentation of marine sanitation device pump-out in Monroe County.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:****A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

**B. Private Sector Impact:**

Owners of vessels in Monroe County on waters of the state that are equipped with a marine sanitation device and that have enclosed living spaces or rooms and are used as a dwelling or living space overnight at any time, may experience a negative fiscal impact due to the requirement that they have proof of a marine sanitation device pumpout every 30 days.

**C. Government Sector Impact:**

None.

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<sup>46</sup> State Affairs Committee and Local Administration and Veterans Affairs Subcommittee, *Local Bills Policies and Procedures Manual 2020-2022*, 1, available at <https://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loaddoc.aspx?PublicationType=Committees&CommitteeId=3117&Session=2021&DocumentType=General+Publications&FileName=2021-2022+Local+Bill+Policy+and+Procedures+Manual.pdf>.

<sup>47</sup> *Id.* at 1-2.

<sup>48</sup> *Id.* at 2.

<sup>49</sup> *Id.* at 2-3.

<sup>50</sup> *Id.* at 3.

<sup>51</sup> *Id.*

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends sections 253.0346 and 327.4108 of the Florida Statutes.

**IX. Additional Information:**

- A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**  
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

**CS by Environment and Natural Resources on January 18, 2022:**

- Clarifies that a bill requirement applies to “linear” nautical miles.
- Adds that the record of the date and location of each marine sanitation device pumpout that certain vessels in Monroe County are required to maintain must also indicate that the vessel was pumped out within the last 30 days.

- B. **Amendments:**

None.