



243006

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate	.	House
Comm: RCS	.	
04/10/2025	.	
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The Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government (Trumbull) recommended the following:

Senate Amendment (with title amendment)

Delete everything after the enacting clause
and insert:

Section 1. This act may be cited as the "Boater Freedom Act."

Section 2. Subsection (3) of section 253.0346, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

253.0346 Lease of sovereignty submerged lands for marinas, boatyards, mooring fields, and marine retailers.-



243006

11 (3) For a facility designated by the department as a Clean
12 Marina, Clean Boatyard, Clean Marine Manufacturer, or Clean
13 Marine Retailer under the Clean Marina Program:

14 (a) A discount of 10 percent on the annual lease fee shall
15 apply if the facility:

- 16 1. Actively maintains designation under the program.
- 17 2. Complies with the terms of the lease.
- 18 3. Does not change use during the term of the lease.

19 (b) Extended-term lease surcharges shall be waived if the
20 facility:

- 21 1. Actively maintains designation under the program.
- 22 2. Complies with the terms of the lease.
- 23 3. Does not change use during the term of the lease.
- 24 4. Is available to the public on a first-come, first-served
25 basis.

26 (c) If the facility is in arrears on lease fees or fails to
27 comply with paragraph (b), the facility is not eligible for the
28 discount or waiver under this subsection until arrears have been
29 paid and compliance with the program has been met.

30 Section 3. Subsection (2) of section 327.45, Florida
31 Statutes, is amended to read:

32 327.45 Protection zones for springs.—

33 (2) The commission may establish by rule protection zones
34 that restrict the speed and operation of vessels, or that
35 prohibit or modify the allowable means of anchoring, mooring,
36 beaching, or grounding ~~of~~ vessels, to protect and prevent
37 significant harm to first, second, and third magnitude springs
38 and springs groups, including their associated spring runs, as
39 determined by the commission using the most recent Florida



243006

40 Geological Survey springs bulletin. Significant ~~This~~ harm
41 includes negative impacts to water quality, water quantity,
42 hydrology, wetlands, and aquatic and wetland-dependent species
43 where the operation, anchoring, mooring, beaching, or grounding
44 of vessels is determined to be the predominant cause of negative
45 impacts.

46 Section 4. Section 327.47, Florida Statutes, is amended to
47 read:

48 327.47 Competitive grant programs.—The commission shall
49 develop and administer competitive grant programs funded with
50 moneys transferred pursuant to s. 206.606(1)(d). Grants may be
51 awarded for the construction and maintenance of publicly owned
52 boat ramps, parking for boat-hauling vehicles and trailers,
53 piers, and docks; boater education; deployment of manatee
54 technical avoidance technology; and economic development
55 initiatives that promote boating in the state. The commission
56 may adopt rules pursuant to chapter 120 to implement this
57 section.

58 Section 5. Section 327.56, Florida Statutes, is amended to
59 read:

60 327.56 Safety and marine sanitation equipment inspections;
61 probable cause; qualified.—

62 (1) An ~~No~~ officer may not shall board any vessel or perform
63 a vessel stop in this state unless to make a safety or marine
64 sanitation equipment inspection if the owner or operator is not
65 aboard. When the owner or operator is aboard, an officer may
66 board a vessel with consent or when the officer has probable
67 cause or knowledge to believe that a violation of a provision of
68 this chapter has occurred or is occurring.



243006

69 (2) An officer may not perform a vessel stop or board a
70 vessel for the sole purpose of performing a safety or marine
71 sanitation equipment inspection. A violation of safety or marine
72 sanitation equipment requirements is a secondary offense, rather
73 than a primary offense ~~An officer may board a vessel when the~~
74 ~~operator refuses or is unable to display the safety or marine~~
75 ~~sanitation equipment required by law, if requested to do so by a~~
76 ~~law enforcement officer, or when the safety or marine sanitation~~
77 ~~equipment to be inspected is permanently installed and is not~~
78 ~~visible for inspection unless the officer boards the vessel.~~

79 ~~(2) Inspection of floating structures for compliance with~~
80 ~~this section shall be as provided in s. 403.091.~~

81 Section 6. Subsection (2) of section 327.70, Florida
82 Statutes, is amended to read:

83 327.70 Enforcement of this chapter and chapter 328.—

84 (2) (a) 1. The commission, in coordination with the
85 Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, shall create a
86 “Florida Freedom Boater” safety inspection decal for issue at
87 the time of registration or renewal, signifying that the vessel
88 is deemed to have met the safety equipment carriage and use
89 requirements of this chapter. Upon demonstrated compliance with
90 the safety equipment carriage and use requirements of this
91 chapter at the time of registration or renewal ~~during a safety~~
92 ~~inspection initiated by a law enforcement officer, the operator~~
93 of a vessel shall be issued a “Florida Freedom Boater” safety
94 inspection decal ~~signifying that the vessel is deemed to have~~
95 ~~met the safety equipment carriage and use requirements of this~~
96 ~~chapter at the time and location of such inspection.~~ The
97 commission may designate by rule the timeframe for expiration



243006

98 of, and the specific design for, the "Florida Freedom Boater"
99 safety inspection decal. However, a decal may not be valid for
100 less than 1 calendar year or more than 5 years at the time of
101 issue and, at a minimum, must meet the standards specified in
102 this paragraph. ~~All decals issued by the commission on or before~~
103 ~~December 31, 2018, are no longer valid after that date.~~

104 2. The "Florida Freedom Boater" safety inspection decal, ~~if~~
105 ~~displayed~~, must be located within 6 inches of the inspected
106 vessel's properly displayed vessel registration decal. For
107 nonmotorized vessels that are not required to be registered, the
108 "Florida Freedom Boater" safety inspection decal, ~~if displayed~~,
109 must be located above the waterline on the forward half of the
110 port side of the vessel.

111 (b) ~~If a vessel properly displays a valid safety inspection~~
112 ~~decal created or approved by the division, a law enforcement~~
113 ~~officer may not stop the vessel for the sole purpose of~~
114 ~~inspecting the vessel for compliance with the safety equipment~~
115 ~~carriage and use requirements of this chapter unless there is~~
116 ~~reasonable suspicion that a violation of a safety equipment~~
117 ~~carriage or use requirement has occurred or is occurring. This~~
118 subsection does not restrict a law enforcement officer from
119 stopping a vessel for any other lawful purpose when the officer
120 has probable cause to believe that a violation of this chapter
121 has occurred or is occurring.

122 Section 7. Section 327.75, Florida Statutes, is created to
123 read:

124 327.75 Watercraft Energy Source Freedom Act.—

125 (1) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the
126 "Watercraft Energy Source Freedom Act."



243006

127 (2) DEFINITIONS.—For the purposes of this section, the
128 term:

129 (a) "Energy source" means any source of energy used to
130 power a watercraft, including, but not limited to, gasoline,
131 diesel fuel, electricity, hydrogen, and solar power.

132 (b) "Watercraft" means any vessel or craft designed for
133 navigation on water, including boats and personal watercraft.

134 (3) PROHIBITION ON RESTRICTIONS BASED ON ENERGY SOURCE.—
135 Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, a state agency,
136 municipality, governmental entity, or county may not restrict
137 the use or sale of a watercraft based on the energy source used
138 to power the watercraft, including an energy source used for
139 propulsion or used for powering other functions of the
140 watercraft.

141 Section 8. Subsection (3) of section 379.226, Florida
142 Statutes, is amended to read:

143 379.226 Florida Territorial Waters Act; alien-owned
144 commercial fishing vessels; prohibited acts; enforcement.—

145 (3) No license shall be issued by the Fish and Wildlife
146 Conservation Commission under s. 379.361~~7~~ to any vessel owned in
147 whole or in part by any alien power, ~~which subscribes to the~~
148 ~~doctrine of international communism, or any subject or national~~
149 ~~thereof, who subscribes to the doctrine of international~~
150 ~~communism, or any individual who subscribes to the doctrine of~~
151 ~~international communism, or who shall have signed a treaty of~~
152 ~~trade, friendship and alliance or a nonaggression pact with any~~
153 ~~communist power. The commission shall grant or withhold said~~
154 ~~licenses where other alien vessels are involved on the basis of~~
155 ~~reciprocity and retorsion, unless the nation concerned shall be~~



243006

156 ~~designated as a friendly ally or neutral by a formal suggestion~~
157 ~~transmitted to the Governor of Florida by the Secretary of State~~
158 ~~of the United States. Upon the receipt of such suggestion~~
159 ~~licenses shall be granted under s. 379.361, without regard to~~
160 ~~reciprocity and retorsion, to vessels of such nations.~~

161 Section 9. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

162

163 ===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

164 And the title is amended as follows:

165 Delete everything before the enacting clause
166 and insert:

167 A bill to be entitled
168 An act relating to vessels; providing a short title;
169 amending s. 253.0346, F.S.; including Clean Marine
170 Manufacturers within the Clean Marine Program;
171 amending s. 327.45, F.S.; specifying that the Fish and
172 Wildlife Conservation Commission's authorization to
173 establish protection zones includes modifying the
174 allowable means of certain vessel positioning to
175 prevent significant harm to certain springs; revising
176 what constitutes significant harm; amending s. 327.47,
177 F.S.; authorizing certain grants to be awarded for the
178 construction and maintenance of publicly owned parking
179 for boat-hauling vehicles and trailers; amending s.
180 327.56, F.S.; prohibiting an officer from performing a
181 vessel stop or boarding a vessel without probable
182 cause; prohibiting an officer from performing a vessel
183 stop or boarding a vessel under certain circumstances;
184 providing that a violation of safety or marine



243006

185 sanitation equipment requirements is a secondary
186 rather than a primary offense; amending s. 327.70,
187 F.S.; requiring the commission, in coordination with
188 the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles,
189 to create the "Florida Freedom Boater" safety
190 inspection decal for specified purposes; providing for
191 the award of such decal; providing requirements for
192 such decal; authorizing an officer to stop a vessel
193 for a lawful purpose when the officer has probable
194 cause or knowledge to believe a violation of certain
195 provisions has occurred or is occurring; creating s.
196 327.75, F.S.; providing a short title; defining the
197 terms "energy source" and "watercraft"; prohibiting
198 specified entities from restricting the use or sale of
199 watercraft based on the energy source used by such
200 watercraft; amending s. 379.226, F.S.; revising
201 provisions prohibiting the issuance of a license to a
202 vessel owned by certain alien powers; providing an
203 effective date.