

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

BILL ANALYSIS

This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

BILL #: [CS/HB 669](#)

TITLE: Public Waters

SPONSOR(S): Gossett-Seidman

COMPANION BILL: [SB 1042](#) (Rodriguez)

LINKED BILLS: None

RELATED BILLS: None

Committee References

[Natural Resources & Disasters](#)
16 Y, 0 N, As CS

[Intergovernmental Affairs](#)

[Budget](#)

[State Affairs](#)

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:

The bill prohibits counties, municipalities, and special districts from applying to establish or maintain a mooring field outside of its territorial boundaries. The bill also prohibits counties from applying to establish or maintain mooring fields within an incorporated area.

The bill provides its provisions do not apply to a mooring field that has been approved by all jurisdictional local governments or that has been issued a final, nonappealable permit by the Department of Environmental Protection.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:

None.

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ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the bill prohibits a county, municipality, or [special district](#) from applying for a permit to establish or maintain a [mooring field](#) outside its territorial boundaries. The bill further prohibits, notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, a county from applying for a permit to establish or maintain a mooring field within an incorporated area. (Section [1](#))

The bill provides its provisions do not apply to a mooring field that has been approved by all jurisdictional local governments or that has been issued a final, nonappealable permit by the Department of Environmental Protection.

The bill provides an effective date of upon becoming law. (Section [2](#))

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

[Mooring Fields](#)

Anchoring and mooring refer to a boater seeking and using a safe harbor on the public waterway system for an undefined duration.¹ Anchoring is the use of an anchor carried on the vessel, while mooring refers to attaching the

¹ Ankersen, Hamann, & Flagg, [Anchoring Away: Government Regulation and the Rights of Navigation in Florida](#) 2, (last visited Feb. 9, 2026).

vessel to a device that is permanently affixed to the bottom of a waterway.² Mooring fields are designated areas used for a system of properly spaced moorings.³

Current law authorizes local governments, by general permit, to construct, operate, and maintain public mooring fields, each for up to 100 vessels.⁴ To qualify for such general permit, a local government must comply with certain conditions. This includes having a management plan, meeting siting and design criteria, meeting operational criteria, and having a sovereignty submerged lands lease with the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund⁵ if the public mooring field and associated land-based support facilities are located on sovereign submerged lands.⁶

Specifically, mooring fields must be located in areas where navigational access already exists between the mooring field and the nearest customarily used access channel or navigable waters for the sizes of vessels that the mooring field is designed to serve.⁷ 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.⁸ Local governments may not locate mooring fields in an area within a marked or customarily used navigational channel, where the field would adversely affect critical marine habitats or waters classified for shellfish harvesting, or in predominantly fresh waters.⁹ Certain activities are not authorized within mooring fields, including major boat repairs and maintenance, fueling activities other than from the land-based support facility, and boat hull scraping and painting.¹⁰

Local governments may enact and enforce ordinances that prohibit or restrict the mooring or anchoring of floating structures or live-aboard vessels within their jurisdictions and vessels that are within the marked boundaries of permitted mooring fields.¹¹ However, such local governments may not enact, continue in effect, or enforce any ordinance or local regulation that regulates the anchoring of vessels, other than live-aboard vessels and commercial vessels (excluding commercial fishing vessels), outside the marked boundaries of permitted mooring fields.¹²

Special Districts

A “special district” is a unit of local government created for a particular purpose, with jurisdiction to operate within a limited geographic boundary.¹³ Special districts are created by general law, special act, local ordinance, or rule of the Governor and Cabinet.¹⁴ A special district has only those powers expressly provided by, or reasonably implied from, the authority provided in the district’s charter. Special districts provide specific municipal services in

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ [S. 373.118\(4\), F.S.](#); R. 62-330.420(1), F.A.C.

⁵ State lands are held in trust for the use and benefit of the people of Florida by the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund. The Board consists of the Governor, Attorney General, Chief Financial Officer, and Commissioner of Agriculture. The Board may sell, transfer, and administer state lands in the manner consistent with state law. *See* ss. 253.001 and [253.02\(1\), F.S.](#)

⁶ R. 62-330.420(3)(a)-(e), F.A.C.

⁷ R. 62-330.420(3)(b)1., F.A.C.

⁸ R. 62-330.420(3)(b)3., F.A.C. Such details must be included in the management plan.

⁹ R. 62-330.420(3)(b)4., F.A.C.

¹⁰ R. 62-330.420(3)(d)5., F.A.C.

¹¹ [S. 327.60\(3\), F.S.](#) A “floating structure” is a floating entity 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, such as entities used as residences, meeting facilities, or hotels or motels. *See* [s. 327.02\(14\), F.S.](#) A “live aboard vessel” means a vessel used solely as a residence and not navigation, a vessel for which a declaration of domicile has been filed pursuant to [s. 222.17, F.S.](#), or a vessel used as a residence that does not have an effective means of propulsion for safe navigation. *See* [s. 327.02\(23\), F.S.](#)

¹² [S. 327.60\(2\)\(f\), F.S.](#)

¹³ *See Halifax Hospital Medical Center v. State of Fla.*, et al., 278 So. 3d 545, 547 (Fla. 2019).

¹⁴ *See* ss. [189.02\(1\)](#), [189.031\(3\)](#), and [190.005\(1\), F.S.](#) *See generally* [s. 189.012\(6\), F.S.](#)

addition to, or in place of, those provided by a municipality or county.¹⁵ Special districts are funded through the imposition of ad valorem taxes, fees, or charges on the users of those services as authorized by law.¹⁶

BILL HISTORY

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
Natural Resources & Disasters Subcommittee	16 Y, 0 N, As CS	2/12/2026	Skinner	Jones
THE CHANGES ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removed the provisions related to the sampling of beach waters and public bathing places. Removed the provisions related to health advisories and signage. Revised the applicability for the public mooring field provision by removing a date. 			
Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee				
Budget Committee				
State Affairs Committee				

THIS BILL ANALYSIS HAS BEEN UPDATED TO INCORPORATE ALL OF THE CHANGES DESCRIBED ABOVE.

¹⁵ Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee, [Local Government Formation Manual](#), p. 56 (last visited February 9, 2026).

¹⁶ The method of financing a district must be stated in its charter. Ss. [189.02\(4\)\(g\)](#), [189.031\(3\)](#), F.S. Independent special districts may be authorized to impose ad valorem taxes as well as non-ad valorem special assessments in the special acts comprising their charters. *See, e.g.*, [ch. 2023-335, s. 1\(6\), Laws of Fla.](#) (East River Ranch Stewardship District). *See also, e.g.*, [ss. 190.021](#) (community development districts), [191.009](#) (independent fire control districts), [197.3631](#) (non-ad valorem assessments), [298.305](#) (water control districts), and [388.221](#), F.S. (mosquito control). *See also* [ch. 2004-397, s. 3\(27\), Laws of Fla.](#) (South Broward Hospital District).