
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5332 (as amended by House "A")*

AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN BOATING REGULATIONS.

SUMMARY

This bill makes several changes to Connecticut's boating regulations, including:

1. requiring anyone operating a recreational motorboat to prohibit people in the boat from sitting or standing on, or hanging their legs over, the boat's gunwale (top edge or rim) while it is underway at greater than slow-no-wake speed (the slowest speed necessary to maintain steering control without creating a wake);
2. prohibiting personal watercraft (such as jet skis) and jetted articulated vessel owners from knowingly allowing anyone, rather than only people younger than 16 as under current law, to operate their boat without the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP)-issued certificate required to do so;
3. prohibiting owners from allowing their boat, other than a boat registered in Connecticut, another state, or with the federal government, on state waters unless the owner's current and valid contact information is legibly printed on or attached to the boat in a way DEEP prescribes (generally, smaller boats, such as kayaks, do not require registration and would be subject to this provision);
4. amending waterskiing restrictions on North Stonington's Wyassup Lake;
5. increasing the minimum and maximum fines that generally may be imposed for abandoning a boat; and

6. allowing state and municipal law enforcement agencies to recover a broader range of costs for removing abandoned boats.

*House Amendment "A" replaces the underlying bill. In doing so, it (1) amends the provisions on (a) hanging over a boat's gunwale, (b) allowing unauthorized people to operate a boat, and (c) recovering costs for removing an abandoned boat; (2) removes provisions imposing fines for owners who allow unauthorized people to operate their boats; and (3) adds provisions on (a) requiring contact information on boats and (b) motorboating on Wyassup Lake.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

WYASSUP LAKE

Current law limits operating motorboats on Wyassup Lake to the period from the Saturday before Memorial Day to September 15 annually. The bill removes this restriction, allowing motorboats to be operated year-round, but imposes other restrictions during this period. Specifically, under the bill, from the Saturday before Memorial Day through September 15 annually, motorboats may be operated on Wyassup Lake at speeds above eight miles per hour between 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., and waterskiing is permitted.

However, regardless of these conditions, the bill prohibits waterskiing at any time between the islands and Wyassup Lake's east shore.

ABANDONED BOATS

The bill increases, from between \$300 and \$500 to between \$750 and \$1,000, the minimum and maximum fines that generally may be imposed for abandoning a boat. The bill also allows state and municipal law enforcement agencies to recover reasonable costs, including legal or court costs, from someone who abandoned a boat, to cover the boat's recovery or removal and any associated environmental remediation.

Generally, someone seeking to recover costs associated with removing an abandoned boat must file a notarized notice of abandoned vessel with DEEP and pay a \$20 filing fee. The bill specifies that the

notarization and the filing fee are not required if the party seeking to recover costs is the state, a municipality, or a law enforcement agency.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 34 Nay 0 (03/13/2026)