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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

### **sHB 5332**

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN BOATING REGULATIONS.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill requires anyone operating a motorboat to prohibit people in the boat from hanging any part of their body over the boat's gunwale (top edge) while it is underway (free floating or under power). The bill specifies that this provision does not apply to people in a motorboat that is (1) engaged in anchoring, mooring, or docking activities and (2) proceeding a dead slow speed (not creating a wake, usually just above an idle).

The bill also makes changes to fines associated with certain boating law violations. Specifically, the bill increases, from between \$300 and \$500 to between \$750 and \$1,000, the range of the fine that generally may be imposed for abandoning a boat. The bill also allows the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner to authorize state and municipal law enforcement agencies to recover reasonable costs from an abandoned boat's last recorded owner to cover the boat's recovery and any associated environmental remediation.

Additionally, the bill requires fines for certain boating violations to be issued to the person to whom the boat associated with the violation is registered when the person who committed the violation cannot be determined. Among other things, violations subject to this requirement include knowingly allowing someone who (1) is younger than 16 and (2) does not have the required DEEP-issued certification to do so to operate a personal watercraft, jetted articulated vessel, or other boat. Current law subjects someone who violates these provisions to a fine between \$60 and \$250.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 34 Nay 0 (03/13/2026)