

2024 Legislative Session

Marine Industries Association of Florida Week 2 Report

The 2024 Legislative Session is probably one of the most front-loaded Legislative Session's I have encountered in my thirty years of working in Tallahassee.

As many have heard, Governor DeSantis has ended his campaign for President of the United States. His office has historically been very active in the policy and budgeting process during the Legislative Session, and I would expect that to continue this year. There are still seven weeks left in the Regular Legislative Session and a lot can happen in seven weeks.

As we enter the third week, rumors are starting to emerge of lower than expected allocations for member budget items. As the budget chairs start releasing their budgets we will see if these rumors prove to be true. Remember, the Legislature must pass a balanced budget and it is important for members to bring back money for their districts especially during an election year.

MIAF is busy as we seem to be every year fighting the good fight. We encourage you to come to Tallahassee to learn about the process and lend your voice to marine related issues. Below is some information you might find useful if you plan on attending this year!

Reminder Start Requesting Your Appointments Now!

If you are making appointments to meet with your delegation, I would strongly request you begin making your appointment requests now. Most offices prefer email request, but you are welcome to call the Tallahassee office if you prefer. To find your legislator you can utilize the [Florida Senate website](#) or the [Florida House of Representatives website](#). Look up your legislators and respectfully request an appointment. Please know it might take time for them to get back with you as they might not have that week's calendar when you contact them.

Marine Industries Day-Tallahassee

Marine Industries Association of Florida and Marine Associations from around the state will be attending Marine Industry Days at the Florida Capitol on February 6th and 7th. The event will begin on February 6th at 1:00 at the Governor's Club. We have a lineup of speakers and special guests that day. On February 7th we will have breakfast briefing and head to the Capitol for meetings. We would love for you to attend and join us. For more information go www.marineindustriesassociationflorida.com.

We are very busy this year and as we are working daily at the Capitol, we are also working diligently on your event February 6 and 7. We are hoping to have some familiar speakers and a few new ones to expand our discussions on the industry in Florida.

As you will see, we have provided links to each bill, bill staff analysis and bill history for your convenience. Please let us know if you would like us to add any boating related bills to the report.



Here are some of the bills we are tracking this Legislative Session:

Boating Safety

[Senate Bill 30-Boating Safety by Senator Garcia](#)

CS/SB 30 relating to Boating Safety still does not have a linked House companion bill. This bill received three committees of reference in the Senate, Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee, Senate Transportation, and Senate Fiscal Policy.

The bill passed the first committee of reference with a delete everything amendment unanimously December 6th. CS/SB 30 was then placed on the agenda of the second committee of reference, Senate Transportation on January 10th. The bill was temporarily passed. **The bill is not scheduled to be heard on the Senate Transportation agenda January 23rd.**

This is a comprehensive bill relating to boating safety. The bill would delete the age exemption for individuals born before January 1, 1988, to have to take a boater safety course if driving a boat with 10 horsepower or more.

The bill also included language requiring the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to issue an identification card or driver's license with a lifetime boater safety symbol if there is proof the individual received a boater safety identification card.

The bill also requires insurance for an individual convicted of BUI. The bill has other provisions for mandatory boating insurance and limits.

The bill includes language adding boating under the influence and human trafficking to the boater safety course.

This is a comprehensive boating bill. We will keep you posted on the progression of this bill and any potential amendments to other boating vehicles.

Lost and Abandoned Property

[House Bill 487-Lost and Abandoned Property by Representative Chaney](#)

[Senate Bill 682-Lost and Abandoned Property by Senator Martin](#)

House Bill 487 has been moving through the process quickly. The bill only had two committees of reference. The bill was referred to the House Criminal Justice Committee and to the House Judiciary Committee. The bill has passed both committees unanimously. The bill passed the House Criminal Justice Subcommittee 15-0. The bill passed the second committee of reference as a committee substitute 19-0. CS/HB 487 is now scheduled for the House Special Order January 17th. **The bill passed on the House floor 115-0. The bill has been sent to the Senate and has been sent to the Senate Rules Committee.**

The bill deals with derelict vessels and has been supported by the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

The goal of the legislation is to eliminate the number of trips law enforcement must make to meet statutory requirement to remove a derelict vessel.

The Senate Bill is comparable. The Senate Bill has received three committees of reference, Senate Environment and Natural Resources, Senate Criminal Justice, and Senate Rules. The bill was on the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee agenda January 10th. The bill passed 7-0. The bill has two more stops. **The bill is not scheduled to be heard this week in the Senate Criminal Justice Committee.**

Remember the bills must be identical to pass.

Anchoring

[House Bill 437-Anchoring Limitation Areas by Representative Porras](#)

[Senate Bill 192-Anchoring Vessels in Anchoring Limitation Areas by Senator Garcia](#)

Every year it seems Marine Industries deals with proposed bills limiting or banning anchoring on sovereign submerged state lands. Unfortunately, this year is not any different.

Committee Substitute for House Bill 437 has two committees of reference. The bill was referred to the House Agriculture, Conservation and Resiliency Subcommittee and the House Infrastructure Strategies Committee. The bill was heard in the first committee of reference on December 12th and passed with an amendment. The bill is now a committee substitute that will limit anchoring in sections in Biscayne Bay in Miami -Dade County. The bill states that a vessel may not anchor within 200 yards from the shore of the City of Miami Beach between State Road A1A and State Road 112. The law remains the same with the timeframe for the limitation area between one half hour after sunset and one half hour before sunrise. This bill is scheduled to be heard in the second committee of reference on January 16th at 1:00 pm. The bill passed the House Infrastructure Strategies Committee with an amendment 19-1. **The bill is now a CS/CS/HB 437. The amendment requires documentation the vessel was in another location a nautical mile away with a period of less than 45 days. The amendment also requires a permanently affixed tracking device to prove the location, distance, and time frame of anchoring. The only “no” vote was Representative Stevenson. The bill is now ready to be heard on the House floor.**

Senate Bill 192 has three committees of reference. The bill is referred to Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee, Senate Community Affairs, and the Senate Rules Committee. **The bill is scheduled to be heard in its first committee of reference. Senate Bill 192 is scheduled to be heard in the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee January 23rd at 3:30 p.m. The amendment deadline for the bill is Monday at 3:30 p.m. We would anticipate an amendment to mirror the House Bill.**

Vessel Safety

[Senate Bill 822-Vessel Safety by Senator Rodriguez](#)

The bill still does not have a linked House companion. The bill has three committee references, Senate Criminal Justice, Senate Appropriations Committee on Criminal Justice and Civil Justice and Senate Fiscal Policy.

The bill is not currently scheduled to be heard in the Senate Criminal Justice Committee this week.

The bill amends the current statute regarding penalties relating to collisions, accidents, and casualties. The bill amends penalties for damages only, injury other than serious bodily injury, serious bodily injury, and death of an individual under the influence. The bill goes on to amend the reckless and careless operation of a vessel. The bill provides an individual convicted of BUI manslaughter receive a minimum mandatory term of four years. The bill also includes penalties for killing an unborn child due to injuries to mother.

I highly recommend reading this bill to see the proposed changes for boating violations on the water.

Safe Storage of Firearm and Ammunition within Motor Vehicles and Vessels

[Senate Bill 1250-Safe Storage of Firearm and Ammunition within Motor Vehicles and Vessels by Senator Berman](#)

[House 1087-Safe Storage of Firearm and Ammunition within Motor Vehicles and Vessels- by Representative Cassello](#)

This bill requires a gun or ammunition be locked in a trunk, glove box, utility box or a locked container. This must be done when the vessel is not under the individual's control. This applies to unloaded weapons as well.

Neither Senate Bill 1250 or House Bill 1087 are scheduled to be heard in their first committees of reference as of the writing of this report.

Installation of Waterway Markers

[Senate Bill 784-Installation of Waterway Markers by Senator Gruters](#)

This bill does not have a House companion. The Senate Bill is referred to three committees, Senate Environment and Natural Resources, Senate Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment and General Government, and Senate Fiscal Policy.

The bill deals specifically with the installation of waterway markers. The proposed legislation requires all waterway markers permitted July 1, 2024, or after being attached to plastic breakaway structure or floating buoys. This language applies to state and local governments. The bill also prohibits waterway markers being attached to steel beams wood pilings. The bill allows for state and local governments to replace existing waterway markers prior to this language to be replaced by January 1, 2025.

Senate Bill 784 is not scheduled to be heard in the first committee of reference this week.

