

2026 Legislative Session

Marine Industries Association of Florida Week 7

Usually, with two weeks left in a nine-week legislative session, I could predict how the legislature would finish their business and have an idea of an approximate timeframe.

Unfortunately, as we begin the eighth week all options are still on the table. We could end on time and sine die on March 13th, we could extend and leave all pending legislation alive, or we could sine die and come back for special sessions this spring.

Hopefully, we will have more insight this week and will update you as soon as we get the information.

There are several big issues outstanding including the budget, artificial intelligence, databases, rural renaissance and property tax to name a few. Add to that term limits and an election year and as you can imagine the pressure is building.

MIAF is still working hard, reading amendments, tracking several bills, appropriations and meetings with members. As of the writing of this report there is one boating bill positioned to pass and several budget items and a budget conforming bill of interest that would increase funding to FWC.

Again, we cannot stress enough we must stay alert to all bills and amendments as this is the time of year legislative proposals are amended and bills that have been stalled begin to move again.

Please stay alert to your email and we will send updates as we receive them over the next two weeks.

If budget conference begins next weekend, the MIAF weekly report might be delayed due to weekend meetings. Again, we cannot predict but want to give you proper notice.

Finally, former Senator Charlie Dean passed away this week. Senator Dean was a strong supporter of the Marine Industries of Florida. Senator Dean championed the marina hurricane grant program after the 2004 hurricanes and worked tirelessly to help protect and preserve public access to our waterways. Senator Dean was a marine industry champion, but more importantly he was a friend. He will be missed!

Below are some of the bills we have highlighted for you and some budget highlights as well.

Please let us know if you would like us to add any other boating issues to the report.

Thank you again for allowing us to be your voice in Tallahassee!

Boater Safety

[Senate Bill 900 by Senator Ileana Garcia](#)

[House Bill 1447 by Representative Rob Long](#)

Boating safety continues to be a hot topic in Florida. Last year, the legislature passed major changes to boating safety laws.



This year there is a bill in the Senate and House adding to what was passed last session. These bills are very lengthy and need a concise and thorough review by the industry and law enforcement.

We have reached out to FWC and asked for their commentary on this bill.

Senate Bill 900 by Senator Garcia **was temporarily passed** in its first committee of reference in Senate Criminal Justice Committee on January 20th. The bill had one amendment filed by the sponsor and a late filed amendment by Senator Martin. The bill was not scheduled in Senate Criminal Justice during the second, third, fourth, fifth or sixth weeks of Session. The Senate Criminal Justice Committee is not scheduled to meet again as of the writing of this report.

Senate Bill 900 has three committees of reference. Senate Criminal Justice Committee, Senate Appropriations on Transportation and Economic Development and Senate Fiscal Policy.

House Bill 1447 was referred to four committees. The bill was referred to House Criminal Justice Subcommittee, House Governmental Operations, House Budget Committee and House Judiciary Committee. The bill did not make the February 18th agenda and as of the writing of this report, there are not more meetings scheduled for the first committee of reference.

There have not been any changes to these bills during the seventh week.

Public Waters

[Senate Bill 1042 by Senator Ana Maria Rodriguez](#)

[House Bill 669 by Representative Peggy Gossett-Seidman](#)

The bills include everything from mooring boundaries to protecting beaches and bathing places. The bill concerning aspect of the bill would be the language specifying local government boundaries when applying for mooring field permits.

The Senate Bill is sponsored by Senator Rodriguez and has three committees of reference. The first committee is the Senate Health Policy Committee. The bill was not heard in the sixth week. The Senate Health Policy Committee is not scheduled to meet again as of the writing of this report. The bill is also referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment and General Government. We will continue to watch for amendments.

House Bill 669 has four committees of reference. The bill refers to House Natural Resources and Disasters Subcommittee, House Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee, House Budget and House State Affairs.

A proposed committee substitute and amendment to the proposed committee substitute passed the House Natural Resources and Disasters on February 12th. Representative Skidmore did a fantastic job asking questions regarding the need for the bill. The Town of Palm Beach did waive in support of the proposed committee bill. **We will continue to watch this bill as it could be amended to other bills.**

The bill had two committees of reference removed and now only has one committee left, the House

State Affairs Committee.

The bill was not heard in the House State Affairs Committee on February 24th or February 26th. The House State Affairs Committee does not have any committee meetings scheduled at this time.

The bill language is also available to be amended onto other bills since it was heard in its first committee. We are watching closely as this language could be amended onto other boating bills.

The House Bill and Senate Bill are now comparable.

Boating Restricted Areas

[House Bill 1173 by Representative Tyler Sorois \(House Majority Leader\)](#)

This bill was filed by the House Majority Leader. The bill does not have a Senate companion currently. The bill is referred to three committees, House Natural Resources and Disasters Subcommittee, House Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee and House State Affairs Committee. A delete everything amendment was heard and passed the House Natural Resources and Disasters Subcommittee on February 12th. Again, Representative Skidmore did a good job of asking questions especially requesting clarity if FWC still needed to approve the ordinances as staff changed “shall not” to “may not” in the delete all. This is a drafting concern, and we have discussed it with staff. **We have also discussed it with the Senate and with FWC. FWC believes they will still have final say over approving the ordinances.**

As anticipated, this language was also amended in Representative Andrade’s bill (HB 1103) regarding code enforcement and derelict vessels. **This bill passed the House State Affairs on February 24th unanimously. From this point forward, we will watch HB 1103 for this language and its Senate companion SB 1682. CS/CS/HB 1103 is on House Special Order March 3rd.**

Please remember, last year bills without Senate companions did pass as they were sent to the Senate and referred to committee, heard and then passed on the Senate floor. We will be watching this bill closely.

Again, we discussed our concerns with FWC regarding local interpretation which could be permissive with the drafting change.

Surface Waters/Coral Reefs

[Senate Bill 1422 by Senator Ileana Garcia](#)

[House Bill 1319 by Representative Lindsay Cross](#)

This bill filed by Senator Garcia and Representative Cross are **no longer** identical. Senate Bill 1422 has three committees of reference. The bill is referred to Senate Environment and Natural Resources, Senate Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment and General Government and Rules. The bill passed by the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee on February 3rd with a delete everything amendment. The bill is now related to Coral Reefs. We sent the bill and staff analysis for review. If you are interested in reviewing the information immediately, please click the link above for the Senate Bill. The bill does reference Palm Beach. The bill is not on the agenda this week in the Senate Appropria-

tions Committee on Agriculture, Environment and General Government on the 25th. **As of the writing of this report, the Senate Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment and General Government does not have any more meetings scheduled.**

House Bill 1319 by Representative Cross only has two committees of reference. The bill is referred to House Natural Resources and Disaster and House State Affairs Committee. The bill did not make the agenda on the 18th. **As of the writing of this report, there are not any more meetings on the calendar.**

Nature Based Coastal Resiliency

[Senate Bill 302 by Senator Ileana Garcia](#)

[House Bill 1035 by Representative Jim Mooney Jr.](#)

House Bill 1035 is referred to two committees of reference. The bill is referred to the House Natural Resources and Disasters Subcommittee and the House State Affairs Committee. The bill passed the House Natural Resources and Disasters Subcommittee unanimously. The bill passed the House State Affairs Committee on February 17th as a committee substitute and is now ready to be heard on the House floor. **The bill has been placed on the House calendar.**

Senate Bill 302 passed the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee with an amendment. The bill is now a committee substitute. The bill has two more committees of reference. The next stop is the Senate Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment and General Government. The last stop for the bill is the Senate Fiscal Policy Committee.

Senate Bill 302 passed the Senate Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment and General Government this week. The bill passed with a delete all amendment 11-0. The bill is now a Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute. The bill passed the Senate Fiscal Policy Committee. **CS/CS/SB 302 passed the Senate floor and is now in messages to the House.**

The bills are similar and are positioned to pass this legislative session.

Local Administration of Vessel Restrictions

[Senate Bill 1682 by Senator Jay Trumbull](#)

[House Bill 1103 by Representative Alex Andrade](#)

The bills are identical. They allow local governments to pass ordinances granting code enforcement administrative authority over vessels at risk or becoming derelict, derelict vessels and long-term anchoring permits.

The Senate bill has three committees of reference. The bill passed the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee on January 27th. The bill passed the Senate Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment and General Government, the second committee of reference on February 4th. The bill was amended with language reducing the number of moorings in statute for the Key West Bight City Dock. Senate Bill 1682 is now a committee substitute. **The bill passed the Senate Rules Committee on February 17th. The bill was then placed on the Senate Special Order and temporarily postponed and waiting for the House bill to come over in messages.**

House Bill also has three committees of reference. The bill is referred to House Natural Resources and Disasters Subcommittee, House Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee and House State Affairs Committee. The bill passed by the House Natural Resources and Disasters Subcommittee is January 28th with an amendment and is now a committee substitute. **The bill passed the House Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee with amendments including adding the language from the House Boating Restricted Area bill. The bill passed the final stop, the House State Affairs Committee on February 24th. No amendments were offered in the committee.**

Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for House Bill 1103 is scheduled on the House Special Order calendar March 3rd.

We expect the House bill to be sent to the Senate after passage.

We have reached out to FWC and discussed these bills multiple times.

Motor Vehicle Registration

We will be watching House Bill 841 by Representative Fabricio and Senate Bill 982 by Senator Rodriguez relating to Motor Vehicle Registration. Meetings this week hinted that vessel registration potentially could be added to this proposed legislation. We will keep you posted.

The Senate Bill was not heard in its first committee of reference.

The House Bill passed the first committee of reference without any amendments this week. House Bill 841 passed the House State Affairs Committee on February 17th as a committee substitute. The bill passed on the House floor on February 25th 93-17. The bill was sent in Messages to the Senate and then referred to the Senate Rules Committee.

Also, please be aware, House Bil 1233 relating to Transportation sponsored by Representative Griffiths is now a comparable companion to these bills.

Property Taxes

Property tax has been a topic of discussion for the last year. This issue continues to take center stage.

The House of Representatives passed Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for House Joint Resolution 203 by Representative Monique Miller relating to Elimination of Non-School Property for Homestead. The bill had numerous amendments and heated debate. Ultimately, the bill passed on the House floor 80-30 and was sent to the Senate and is now waiting to be heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

For more information or to read the analysis or final language please click on the link below.

<https://flhouse.gov/Sections/Bills/billsdetail.aspx?BillId=82728&SessionId=113>

The House of Representatives still have several other potential resolutions moving through the process.

The Senate has yet to release their plan and the Governor has yet to release his plan during the seventh week.

The Senate and the House would need to pass the same property tax language for it to appear on the 2026 ballot in November.

We will keep you posted as this issue continues to move through the process and we still have two weeks left in the 2026 regular session.

This issue has the potential to be a special session topic in the spring or be an issue that causes the legislature to extend the regular legislative session past March 13th.

Also keep in mind the Governor cannot veto a joint resolution, joint resolutions go to the ballot for the voters to decide in November.

Budget Highlights

Please find below some of the budget highlights we have found in the House and Senate proposed budgets.

The House of Representatives and the Florida Senate have named their respective conferees. Currently we are waiting on the legislature to agree on allocations so we can begin the budget conference process.

Hopefully we will know more early this week whether we will begin to start the negotiations.

A few budget reminders, Florida must pass a balanced budget and the conference report once agreed upon must rest for seventy-two hours before they can vote on final passage. The governor does have line-item veto powers relating to appropriation line items in the conference report. Florida is currently operating under the budget that passed last year and it ends June 30, 2026.

We will keep you updated on the progress of budget talks as they progress.

HB 5001 House Budget Beaches

**1883 GRANTS AND AIDS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND NONSTATE ENTITIES - FIXED CAPITAL OUTLAY BEACH PROJECTS - STATEWIDE
FROM LAND ACQUISITION TRUST FUND . . 50,000,000**

Funds in Specific Appropriation 1883 are provided to the Department of Environmental Protection for distribution to beach and inlet management projects consistent with any component of the comprehensive long-term management plan developed in accordance with section 161.161, Florida Statutes. Funds may be used in accordance with section 161.101, Florida Statutes, for projects on annual ranked lists, storm repair projects, or projects on lands managed by the state.

Boating

1865 SPECIAL CATEGORIES CORAL REEF PROTECTION AND RESTORATION
FROM GENERAL REVENUE FUND 8,000,000

Funds in Specific Appropriation 1865 are provided for coral reef restoration and protection efforts.

1869 SPECIAL CATEGORIES SEAGRASS RESTORATION TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT INITIA-
TIVE FROM GENERAL REVENUE FUND 2,000,000

1882 GRANTS AND AIDS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND NONSTATE ENTITIES - FIXED
CAPITAL OUTLAY CLEAN MARINA
FROM FEDERAL GRANTS TRUST FUND . . . 200,000

1937A SPECIAL CATEGORIES GRANTS AND AIDS - SPECIAL PROJECTS
FROM GENERAL REVENUE FUND 350,000

Funds in Specific Appropriation 1937A are provided for the following projects:

Boater Safety Education Program (HF 1453)..... 100,000
Boating Safety Education, Advocacy & Outreach Program Expansion (HF 2128)..... 250,000

1938 SPECIAL CATEGORIES BOAT RAMP MAINTENANCE CATEGORY

FROM GENERAL REVENUE FUND 306,754
FROM FEDERAL GRANTS TRUST FUND . . . 1,279,730
FROM MARINE RESOURCES CONSERVATION TRUST FUND 67,048
FROM STATE GAME TRUST FUND 143,750

1942 SPECIAL CATEGORIES BOATING AND WATERWAYS ACTIVITIES
FROM MARINE RESOURCES CONSERVATION TRUST FUND 1,944,318

1947 SPECIAL CATEGORIES BOATING SAFETY EDUCATION PROGRAM
FROM MARINE RESOURCES CONSERVATION TRUST FUND 625,650

1948 FIXED CAPITAL OUTLAY DERELICT VESSEL REMOVAL PROGRAM
FROM GENERAL REVENUE FUND 1,000,000

1951 GRANTS AND AIDS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND NONSTATE ENTITIES - FIXED
CAPITAL OUTLAY DERELICT VESSEL REMOVAL PROGRAM
FROM MARINE RESOURCES CONSERVATION TRUST FUND 2,291,976

The funds in Specific Appropriation 1951 are provided to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commis-
sion for grants to local governments to remove, store, destroy, and dispose of, or to pay private contrac-
tors to remove, store, destroy, and dispose of, derelict vessels or vessels declared a public nuisance.

1951A GRANTS AND AIDS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND NONSTATE ENTITIES - FIXED
CAPITAL OUTLAY GRANTS AND AIDS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND NONSTATE ENTI-
TIES - FIXED CAPITAL OUTLAY
FROM GENERAL REVENUE FUND 1,865,000

Funds in Specific Appropriation 1951A are provided for the following projects:

Boca Raton Public Safety Dock Rehabilitation (HF 3269)....	500,000	
Clermont Coast to Coast Traffic Safety Control Station (HF 1371).....	500,000	Historic
Spring Park Public Access Pier Project Phase II Construction (HF3042).....	490,000	
Indian River State Park Fishing Pier (HF 2105).....	225,000	
Melbourne Pineapple Pier Restoration (HF 2101).....	150,000	

1952 GRANTS AND AIDS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND NONSTATE ENTITIES - FIXED CAPITAL OUTLAY FLORIDA BOATING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

FROM FEDERAL GRANTS TRUST FUND ...	6,000,000
FROM MARINE RESOURCES CONSERVATION TRUST FUND	783,844
FROM STATE GAME TRUST FUND	1,250,000

2024 GRANTS AND AIDS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND NONSTATE ENTITIES - FIXED CAPITAL OUTLAY ARTIFICIAL FISHING REEF CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

FROM GENERAL REVENUE FUND	300,000
FROM FEDERAL GRANTS TRUST FUND ...	300,00

**SB 2500
Senate Budget
Beaches**

1883 GRANTS AND AIDS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND NONSTATE ENTITIES - FIXED CAPITAL OUTLAY BEACH PROJECTS - STATEWIDE
FROM LAND ACQUISITION TRUST FUND .. 64,141,067

Funds in Specific Appropriation 1883 are provided to the Department of Environmental Protection for distribution to beach and inlet management projects consistent with any component of the comprehensive long-term management plan developed in accordance with section 161.161, Florida Statutes. Funds shall be used to fund post-construction monitoring and projects 1 through 4 on the Strategic Beach Management Plan and projects 1 through 6 on the Inlet Management Plan.

Boating

1865 SPECIAL CATEGORIES CORAL REEF PROTECTION AND RESTORATION
FROM GENERAL REVENUE FUND

8,000,000
Funds in Specific Appropriation 1865 are provided for coral reef restoration and protection efforts.

1869 SPECIAL CATEGORIES SEAGRASS RESTORATION TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE FROM GENERAL REVENUE FUND

1882 GRANTS AND AIDS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND NONSTATE ENTITIES - FIXED CAPITAL OUTLAY CLEAN MARINA	
FROM FEDERAL GRANTS TRUST FUND ...	200,000

1938 SPECIAL CATEGORIES BOAT RAMP MAINTENANCE CATEGORY

FROM GENERAL REVENUE FUND 306,754
FROM FEDERAL GRANTS TRUST FUND ... 1,279,730
FROM MARINE RESOURCES CONSERVATION TRUST FUND 67,048
FROM STATE GAME TRUST FUND 143,750

1942 SPECIAL CATEGORIES BOATING AND WATERWAYS ACTIVITIES
FROM MARINE RESOURCES CONSERVATION TRUST FUND 2,626,025

1947 SPECIAL CATEGORIES BOATING SAFETY EDUCATION PROGRAM
FROM MARINE RESOURCES CONSERVATION TRUST FUND 625,650

1948 FIXED CAPITAL OUTLAY DERELICT VESSEL REMOVAL PROGRAM
FROM GENERAL REVENUE FUND 2,600,000

1951 GRANTS AND AIDS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND NONSTATE ENTITIES - FIXED
CAPITAL OUTLAY DERELICT VESSEL REMOVAL PROGRAM
FROM MARINE RESOURCES CONSERVATION TRUST FUND 2,400,000

Funds in Specific Appropriation 1951 are provided to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for grants to local governments or to remove, store, destroy, and dispose of, or to pay private contractors to remove, store, destroy, and dispose of, derelict vessels or vessels declared a public nuisance.

1952 GRANTS AND AIDS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND NONSTATE ENTITIES - FIXED
CAPITAL OUTLAY FLORIDA BOATING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
FROM FEDERAL GRANTS TRUST FUND ... 6,000,000
FROM MARINE RESOURCES CONSERVATION TRUST FUND 783,844
FROM STATE GAME TRUST FUND 1,250,000

1952B GRANTS AND AIDS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND NONSTATE ENTITIES - FIXED
CAPITAL OUTLAY GRANTS AND AID - SPECIAL PROJECTS
FROM GENERAL REVENUE FUND 2,950,000

Funds in Specific Appropriation 1952B are provided for the following special projects:

Eckerd College Search and Rescue (SF 2504)..... 350,000
Glades County Indian Prairie Boat Ramp Improvements (SF 3345)..... 2,000,000
Indian River County Riverside Park Fishing Pier (SF 1127)..... 450,000
Melbourne Pineapple Pier Restoration (SF 1178)..... 150,000

2024 GRANTS AND AIDS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND NONSTATE ENTITIES - FIXED
CAPITAL OUTLAY ARTIFICIAL FISHING REEF CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM
FROM GENERAL REVENUE FUND 5,300,000
FROM FEDERAL GRANTS TRUST FUND ... 300,00

SB 2506
Fuel Tax Budget Conforming Bill

This Senate conforming bill is included in the discussions for budget conference. This bill changes existing statute for fuel taxes to percentages increasing funding that benefits certain groups including FWC. This is a bill that will be monitoring closely.

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2026/2506/BillText/pb/PDF>

Boating Capital of the World

Calling all boaters to sign up to purchase a “Boating Capital of the World” license plate. There is a requirement to presale a certain number of license plates before they go into production. We need to get the work out and let everyone know this tag is available for pre-sales and the monies benefit Captain Sandy’s Charities.

We will be highlighting this project all Session and hope you can help us hit our goal!

Please sign up for every vehicle and boat trailer and share with friends and family!



PRE-ORDER your Boating Capital of the World license plate today!

www.boatingplate.com

Thank you so very much for allowing us to be your voice in Tallahassee!

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.