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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

### **sSB 241**

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING BOATING SAFETY.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill appropriates \$5 million to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) from the General Fund for FY 23 to hire more environmental conservation (EnCon) police officers to enforce boating laws on state waters.

The bill also requires the DEEP commissioner to establish a schedule of retention fees that lake authorities may keep for issuing fines to people who violate state boating laws. By law, any two or more towns that have a body of state water within their territorial limits may establish a lake authority by ordinance. The lake authority must cooperate with the DEEP commissioner to enforce boating laws on the water (CGS § 7-151a).

Additionally, the bill does the following:

1. allows law enforcement or fire rescue vessels to use either an audible signal device or flashing lights, rather than both, to indicate that nearby vessels (e.g., boats) must slow or alter course;
2. requires a person operating a vessel within 200 feet of a commercial vessel that is responding to or towing a vessel in distress and using its flashing lights to slow to a slow-no-wake speed (e.g., produce a minimum wake and generally go no more than six miles an hour); and
3. allows the DEEP commissioner to disapprove local boating ordinances that are duplicative of state law or regulation.

By law, towns may adopt local boating ordinances but must submit them to DEEP. If the commissioner does not disapprove them within 60

days, they may take effect. The law already allows the commissioner to disapprove local boating ordinances for other reasons (e.g., if they are unreasonable or unnecessarily restrictive).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2022, except the provisions appropriating funds for EnCon police officers and establishing lake authority retention fees are effective July 1, 2022.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 31 Nay 0 (03/29/2022)