



General Assembly

February Session, 2022

Raised Bill No. 241

LCO No. 1597



Referred to Committee on ENVIRONMENT

Introduced by:
(ENV)

AN ACT CONCERNING BOATING SAFETY.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsection (c) of section 15-133 of the general statutes is
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
3 *1, 2022*):

4 (c) (1) No person shall place or operate a vessel on the waters of the
5 state unless such vessel has a label or tag affixed to the vessel that
6 provides the information specified by the Commissioner of Energy and
7 Environmental Protection pursuant to this subdivision that is intended
8 to allow any law enforcement officer to identify the owner of such
9 vessel. The commissioner shall specify the requirements of such label or
10 tag in the annual digest of boating laws and regulations published
11 pursuant to section 15-138.

12 [(c)] (2) No person shall alter, deface or remove any capacity
13 information label affixed to any vessel.

14 Sec. 2. Subsection (a) of section 15-136 of the general statutes is
15 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*

16 1, 2022):

17 (a) Any town, by ordinance, may make local regulations respecting
18 the operation of vessels on any body of water within its territorial limits.
19 Upon adoption, each such ordinance shall be submitted to the
20 commissioner and, if not disapproved by [him within sixty days
21 thereafter] the commissioner not later than sixty days after such
22 submission, shall take effect as provided in subsection (c) of this section.
23 The commissioner may disapprove any ordinance or part thereof
24 [which he] that the commissioner finds to be arbitrary, unreasonable,
25 unnecessarily restrictive, inimical to uniformity, duplicative of any state
26 law or regulation or inconsistent with the policy of this part.

27 Sec. 3. Subsections (d) and (e) of section 15-154 of the general statutes
28 are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective*
29 *October 1, 2022*):

30 (d) Upon the immediate approach of a law enforcement vessel using
31 an audible signal device [and] or flashing blue lights, or a fire rescue
32 vessel using an audible signal device [and] or flashing red or yellow
33 lights, any person operating a vessel shall immediately slow to a speed
34 sufficient to maintain steerage only, shall alter course, within its ability,
35 so as not to inhibit or interfere with the operation of the law enforcement
36 vessel or fire rescue vessel, and shall proceed, unless otherwise directed
37 by an officer in the law enforcement vessel or fire rescue vessel, at a
38 reduced speed until beyond the area of operation of the law
39 enforcement vessel or fire rescue vessel. Any person operating a vessel
40 who wilfully or negligently obstructs or retards any law enforcement or
41 fire rescue vessel answering an emergency call or in pursuit of fleeing
42 law violators shall be fined not more than two hundred fifty dollars.

43 (e) Any person operating a vessel passing within two hundred feet of
44 a stationary law enforcement vessel using an audible signal device [and]
45 or flashing blue lights, or a stationary fire rescue vessel using flashing
46 red or yellow lights shall reduce speed to a speed of slow-no-wake until
47 there is a distance of more than two hundred feet between such person's

48 vessel and the law enforcement vessel or fire rescue vessel. Any person
49 operating a vessel passing within two hundred feet of a commercial
50 vessel responding to or towing a vessel in distress when such
51 commercial vessel is displaying flashing red or yellow lights shall
52 reduce speed to a speed of slow-no-wake. For purposes of this
53 subsection, "slow-no-wake" means operation of a vessel at a speed that
54 does not produce more than a minimum wake and is not greater than
55 six miles per hour over ground, unless a higher minimum speed is
56 necessary to maintain steerage when traveling with a strong current.

57 Sec. 4. Subsection (a) of section 15-149a of the general statutes is
58 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
59 *1, 2022*):

60 (a) Any person operating a vessel upon the waters of this state which
61 vessel is in any manner involved in an accident in which any person
62 dies, is injured so as to require medical attention, or disappears, shall
63 immediately notify the nearest law enforcement agency having
64 jurisdiction over such accident and, not later than forty-eight hours after
65 such accident, report the matter in writing to the Commissioner of
66 Energy and Environmental Protection. The report shall be on a form
67 prescribed by the commissioner and shall state as accurately as possible
68 the time, place and cause of such accident, the injuries occasioned by the
69 accident and any other facts the commissioner deems necessary. If such
70 operator is physically incapable of notifying the nearest law
71 enforcement agency or of making such report and there is another
72 participant or passenger in the accident not incapacitated, such
73 participant or passenger shall immediately notify the nearest law
74 enforcement agency having jurisdiction over such accident and make
75 the report to the commissioner not later than forty-eight hours after such
76 accident. Any person operating a vessel upon the waters of this state
77 which is in any manner involved in an accident in which the total
78 damages to all property affected by such accident, including property
79 of such operator, is in excess of [five hundred] two thousand dollars,
80 such person shall, not later than five days after such accident, report the
81 matter in writing to the commissioner on such forms as said

82 commissioner may prescribe. If there is no person other than the owner
83 capable of making such report or if the report has not been submitted
84 and the owner of such vessel is not incapacitated, such owner shall, not
85 later than five days after learning of the facts of such accident, report the
86 matter to the commissioner, on such forms as said commissioner may
87 prescribe. Any such operator of a vessel, or surviving participant or
88 passenger in any such accident, or the owner of the vessel involved in
89 any such accident, shall provide any other information or additional
90 report as the commissioner shall require. Failure of any person to
91 comply with any provision of this subsection shall be an infraction.

92 Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2022*) The Commissioner of Energy and
93 Environmental Protection shall establish a schedule of retention fees for
94 lake authorities that provides for the amount of any fine issued by such
95 authority, to any person who violates the boating laws of the state upon
96 such lake, that such authority may retain.

97 Sec. 6. (*Effective July 1, 2022*) The sum of five million dollars is
98 appropriated to the Department of Energy and Environmental
99 Protection from the General Fund, for the fiscal year ending June 30,
100 2023, for the purposes of increasing environmental conservation police
101 officer staffing levels in order to provide enhanced and sustained
102 enforcement of the boating laws of the state on the lakes, rivers and
103 other waters of the state.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	15-133(c)
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	15-136(a)
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	15-154(d) and (e)
Sec. 4	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	15-149a(a)
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	New section
Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	New section

Statement of Purpose:

To (1) require all vessels upon the waters of the state to contain labels that enable law enforcement to readily identify the owner of such vessel, (2) facilitate existing procedures for enforcement of boating laws, and (3) provide incentives, funding and staff for the increased and sustained enforcement of the boating safety laws of the state on the lakes, rivers and other waters of the state.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]