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## OLR Bill Analysis

### HB 6813

#### ***AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SEABIRD AND SHOREBIRD PROTECTION PROGRAM.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill (1) allows the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner to establish a seabird and shorebird protection program under which she may designate and identify protection areas along the state's coast and (2) makes it an infraction to disturb these areas.

The bill authorizes the commissioner to create a list of birds to be protected. The list must include seabirds and shorebirds considered "species of greatest conservation need" in the most recent state wildlife action plan. It may also include other bird species that could benefit from protection.

Under the bill, the commissioner may designate seabird and shorebird protection areas on public land along the state's coastal area for any period during the months of March to September. The commissioner must identify each protection area with string fencing, posts, and signs. She may have volunteers or her agents help install these.

The bill prohibits people from doing the following:

1. entering an identified protection area unless the DEEP commissioner authorizes it;
2. allowing a pet or other animal under their control from coming within 100 feet of an identified protection area, except for a service animal; and

3. operating a vehicle or bicycle within 100 feet of an identified protection area.

Under the bill, a person commits a separate infraction for each violation.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2023, except a provision that allows infractions to be handled through the Centralized Infractions Bureau is effective upon passage.

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Infractions***

Infractions are punishable by fines, usually set by Superior Court judges, of between \$35 and \$90, plus a \$20 or \$35 surcharge and an additional fee based on the fine's amount. (There may be other added charges based on the type of infraction. For example, certain motor vehicle infractions trigger a surcharge of 50% of the fine.) An infraction is not a crime, and violators can pay the fine by mail without making a court appearance.

## **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 33    Nay 0    (03/24/2023)