

Marine Industries Association of Florida Week 2 Report

The second week of the Legislative Session was another fast and furious week for boating issues. As we head into the third week, we continue to see several boating bills continue to be placed on committee agendas in the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Several bills have been amended from their current form and appear to be improving as they move through the committee process.

The Boating Safety Bills, also known as Lucy's Law, were significantly amended as the bills have moved through the committee process. Marine Industries Association of Florida will continue to work with the sponsors and other associations on this bill. Presently, the House and Senate Bill are different. The House Bill is forty-five pages, and the Senate Bill is seven pages. The sponsors have been wonderful meeting with us, and we hope to have more information on how these bills will become identical as they head into their final committee stop.

Anchoring and Vessel Accountability continue to be big topics again this Legislative Session. The House of Representatives is moving a bill aimed at more densely populated counties with population over 1.5 million people and the Senate appears to be moving an anchoring bill relating to limitations at ports and has a vessel accountability bill that aims to address the derelict vessel problem on Florida waterways. Unfortunately, it is not clear which bill will get steam, if all will get steam or if they will cancel each other out at this point. We have and will continue to meet with the sponsors and are very appreciative of their time to listen to our concerns and try and address them.

This year has been very busy and hectic with the number of boating bills filed. We are constantly trying to address concerns raised about the proposed legislation and we are sharing many of the ideas we have been promoting over the last year.

MIAF has taken the lead and has been promoting the "Outdoor Education" course in high schools. This class is an elective and the curriculum has already been approved by the Department of Education. The course number is 1502480. Last year, we set up a meeting in Bay County with FWC and showcased the program and its success. We hope to continue to push all school districts to offer this course. We have also inquired about developing a curriculum for elementary and middle school students. We have shared this information with several members on education committees.

Another issue Marine Industries has advocated for is more on the water law enforcement. This has been a talking point for several years. During the House Committee on Lucy's Law, several legislators spoke. Representative Botana encouraged everyone to take a boater safety course and Representative Basabe went on the record asking for more on the water law enforcement.

He even released a statement after the committee regarding the issue and it is below for your information. Representative Basabe is from Miami Beach and has had an open door to marine industries for years to discuss the issues in Miami and try to find resolution to the issues in his district.



Below is a statement released by State Representative Fabian Basabe this week after going on the record for the need for more on the water law enforcement.

“FWC is in my district, and they’ve been a strong and reliable partner to Miami-Dade and local municipalities. But let’s be clear — Miami-Dade as a whole is responsible for enforcing boating laws year-round. Good leadership means taking responsibility, not pointing fingers when things go wrong. The only reason FWC stepped in to handle this investigation is because there was a homicide on the water — but what about every other day of the year? Where’s the accountability then?”

Let’s not pretend this is an isolated incident. Left-leaning cities and counties have allowed lax enforcement to create a dangerous culture of lawlessness — on land and at sea. We’ve seen the consequences on Ocean Drive during Spring Break — chaos, open drug use, violence — and now that same mindset has spread to the water. When you fail to enforce the rules, people start to believe there are no rules. That’s how you get reckless boating, fatal accidents, and a ‘Spring Break on the water’ mentality where no one respects the law.

Rep. Joseph’s attempt to single out FWC is not only disingenuous — it’s a political cop-out. FWC does its job — but they can’t be the sole enforcer of safety on the water. If Miami-Dade refuses to lead and enforce the laws it’s responsible for, why should anyone else take them seriously?

We MUST do better — as a community and as a state — to protect our children and our families. Reckless behavior on the water is not just careless — it’s deadly. How many more lives need to be lost before we take this seriously? This bill is about restoring order — not just punishing reckless behavior after tragedy strikes, but preventing it from happening in the first place. Leadership isn’t about shifting blame — it’s about owning the problem and fixing it.”

I look forward to doing more together! FB

Fabián Basabe
#fabianforflorida
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Below are a few of the bills we will be updating weekly in your report. If you would like us to add or delete any bills, please let us know.

As always, thank you for allowing us to be a voice for you in Tallahassee!

We hope to see you for MIA Days in Tallahassee, April 1st and 2nd. If you would like more information, please visit our website <https://www.marineindustriesassociationflorida.com/>. We have a lot of great topics and updates from FWC, NMMA, ASA, and many others....plus a great evening of socializing and networking.

Boating Safety Bills -- “Lucy’s Law”

Senate Bill 628 Boater Safety by Senator Martin

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2025/628>

House Bill 289 Boating Safety by Representative Oliver and Lopez

<https://flhouse.gov/Sections/Bills/billsdetail.aspx?BillId=80882>

Senate Bill 58 Boater Safety by Garcia

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2025/58>

Boating Safety is a big issue this year. There are three bills currently filed regarding Boating Safety. Senate Bill 628 by Senator Jonathan Martin and House Bill 289 by Representative Vanessa Oliver and Vicki Lopez were filed identically. Senator Ileana Garcia filed a more comprehensive bill that included the provisions of the bills filed by Rep Oliver and Senator Martin. The bills to watch are House Bill 289 and Senate Bill 628.

The bills are a result of a tragic accident that happened in Miami. The bills increase penalties for boating violations and boating under the influence. Includes provisions for boating safety and changes the definition of a livery. We anticipate there to be more changes to these bills as they move. They are **still not** identical.

Senate Bill 628 is referred to three committees, Senate Criminal Justice, Senate Transportation and Senate Fiscal Policy. The bill was originally filed striking the boater education date of January 1, 1988. An amendment was filed striking that language in the bill and the bill passed the Senate Criminal Justice Committee as a Committee Substitute. The bill passed the Senate Transportation on March 12th at 8:30 am with an amendment. The bill passed unanimously and is now a Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute. The amendment requires individuals who commit a specific boating violation to complete a boater safety course. This would be a mandatory requirement. Marine Industries supports this change as it would go after bad actors on Florida waters. The next step is the Senate Fiscal Policy Committee. The Senate Fiscal Policy Committee is the final stop for this bill before it will be ready for the Senate floor.

House Bill 289 is also moving this Legislative Session. The bill received three committee references and has already been heard in its first committee and passed with a proposed committee bill that also altered the boater safety education language. We anticipate this to change again.

House Bill 289 is referred to House Criminal Justice Subcommittee where the Proposed Committee Substitute passed unanimously. **The bill was referred to the Senate Budget Committee and the Senate Judiciary Committee last week, but was changed and referred this week to House State Affairs and House Judiciary Committee. CS/HB 289 was heard this week in House State Affairs. The bill was amended with similar language as the Senate bill but still contains a five-year residency requirement. The bill is also forty-five pages and the Senate Bill is seven. The differences between these bills need to be cleared up before final passage as they must be identical.**

We will keep you posted as these bills continue to move through the process.

Anchoring (Port Version)

Senate Bill 594 Anchoring or Mooring at Seaports by Senator Rodriguez

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2025/594>

House Bill 795 No Anchoring or Mooring by LaMarca

<https://flhouse.gov/Sections/Bills/billsdetail.aspx?BillId=81434&SessionId=105>

The proposed bills would allow seaports to apply to FWC to prohibit anchoring or mooring for up to 5,000 feet. This could have serious impacts in areas such as Palm Beach, Bay County and Fort Pierce.

The Senate Bill was heard in the first committee of reference and passed with amendments. Questions were asked about impacts to Peanut Island and Palm Beach. More questions arose about the port in Jacksonville. The bill did pass as a Committee Substitute. After the meeting the Senate sponsor met with us to discuss our concerns.

Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 594 is currently scheduled to be heard in the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee with an amendment to change “up to 5000 feet” to “up to 1500 feet”. This amendment is an improvement but continues to be a great concern. Again, this impacts more areas in the state than just Palm Beach. The bill and amendment are scheduled to be heard Monday, March 17th at 4 p.m.

The House Bill also received three committees of reference. The House bill is referred to House Natural Resources and Disasters Subcommittee, House Commerce Committee and House State Affairs Committee. **MIA had good meetings with the sponsor and expressed concerns regarding the bill. As of the writing of this report, the bill has not been placed on the agenda of the first committee of reference.**

We will continue to watch these bills closely as they could be amended on a comprehensive boating bill as the Legislative Session progresses.

Vessel Accountability

Senate Bill 164 Vessel Accountability by Senator Rodriguez

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2025/164>

House Bill 1149 Vessel Accountability by Representative Basabe

<https://flhouse.gov/Sections/Bills/billsdetail.aspx?BillId=81827&SessionId=105>

This bill is aimed at improving long-term storage issues in the state. FWC has made several presentations on this issue in committees in the House and Senate.

The bill creates a free permit for vessel owners and operators. The bill also adds a few violations and penalties. Included in the proposal is the expansion of the Derelict Vessel Prevention and Voluntary Turn-In Program.

We are looking at this bill closely as we believe it is a priority this Session. We are happy to report we have met with both sponsors and had a great dialogue about this proposal.

The Senate Bill received three committees of reference. The bill is referred to the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee, Senate Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment and General Government, and Senate Fiscal Policy. The bill passed the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee with two amendments and is now a Committee Substitute. **Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 164 is scheduled to be heard in the second committee of reference Senate Appropriation Committee on Agriculture, Environment and General Government. The bill is scheduled to be heard March 18th at 1 p.m. The amendment deadline is March 17th at 5 p.m.**

The House Bill is referred to the House Natural Resources and Disasters Subcommittee, House Criminal Justice Subcommittee and House State Affairs Committee. **As of the writing of this report, the House Bill has not been placed on the agenda of the first committee of reference.**

Driving and Boating Under the Influence -- “Trenton’s Law”

Senate Bill 138 Driving and Boating Under the Influence-Trenton’s Law by Senator Wright
<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2025/138>

House Bill 687 Driving and Boating Under the Influence-Trenton’s Law by Representative Kendall
<https://flhouse.gov/Sections/Bills/billsdetail.aspx?BillId=81302&SessionId=105>

This bill is in response to a tragic accident that resulted in death. The bill adds “impaired substances” to the statute for driving and boating under the influence the bill also has increased penalties and provides for diversion programs

The bill is referred to three committees of reference, Senate Criminal Justice, Senate Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice and Senate Fiscal Policy. The bill passed the Senate Criminal Justice Committee as a committee substitute unanimously and passed the Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice with an 8-2 vote. There was discussion in the committee about using “impaired” over “intoxicated”. **The bill has one more committee stop in Senate Fiscal Policy before it is ready for the Senate floor.**

House Bill 687 has three committees of reference. The bill is referred to House Criminal Justice Subcommittee, House Justice Budget Subcommittee and House Judiciary Committee. **As of the writing of this report, the bill was not on the agenda for the first committee of reference.**

Anchoring

Senate Bill 866 Anchoring Limitation Areas by Senator Martin
<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2025/866>

House Bill 481 Anchoring Limitation Areas by Representative Lopex
<https://flhouse.gov/Sections/Bills/billsdetail.aspx?BillId=81046&SessionId=105>

This is an anchoring bill coming out of Miami Dade. The bill has proposed language that would allow local regulation of vessels outside marked boundaries of mooring fields. Applies to counties with a population of 1.5 million or greater and areas of critical state concerns. The bill also increased the distance of the buffer from anchoring of a mooring field to 300 feet. The bill also sets limitations for overnight anchorage.

The Senate Bill has three committees of reference. The bill is referred to the Senate Environment and Natural Resources, Senate Community Affairs and Senate Rules. **As of the writing of this report, the Senate Bill was not on the agenda of the first committee of reference.**

The House Bill has 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 Disaster Subcommittee on March 11th as a Committee Substitute. The bill has one more committee stop before it is ready for the floor. We are meeting with the House sponsor this week and appreciate them taking time out of their busy schedule to answer some of our questions. We will report next week about our meetings on these bills.**

Boater Freedom

Senate Bill 1388 Vessels Bill by Senator Trumbull
<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2025/1388>

House Bill 1001 Vessels by Representative Griffiths
<https://flhouse.gov/Sections/Bills/billsdetail.aspx?BillId=81631&SessionId=105>

The Governor announced the Boater Freedom bills at a press conference. House Bill 1001 by Representative Griff Griffiths and Senate Bill 1388 by Senator Jay Trumbull. The bills are identical as filed.

The House Bill has three references, House Natural Resources and Disasters Subcommittee, House Criminal Justice Subcommittee and House State Affairs Committee.

The Senate Bill has three committee references, Senate Environmental and Natural Resources, Appropriations Committee Agriculture, Environment and General Government and Fiscal Policy.

As of the writing of this report, neither House Bill 1001 nor Senate Bill 1388 have been placed on the agendas of their first committee of reference. However, House Bill 735 and Senate Bill 1162 relating to Water Access Facilities are moving through the process. The bill language from these bills is included in the Boater Freedom Bills. Simply they provide for Clean Manufacturers to be under the Clean Marina Program.

Gulf of Mexico/Gulf of America Bills

For those who are following the Gulf of America bills they will be making their first appearance in committees this week. **House Bill 575 passed its first committee of reference 13-4 and now has one committee left, House State Affairs. Senate Bill 608 passed the Senate Community Affairs Committee 4-3. The bill only has one more committee, Senate Fiscal Policy. These bills will update the statutes to say Gulf of America.**

Also, Senate Bill 1058 passed its first committee on March 11th with a delete all amendment with a vote of 6-1. The bill is now a committee substitute and has two more committee stops. This bill would update educational materials to read Gulf of America. The House bill was heard in the House Education and Employment Committee on March 13th and passed with a vote of 16-2. The bill is now a committee substitute. The bill has two more committees of reference.

