
BILL ANALYSIS

House Bill 1046

Personal Flotation Devices

Brief Description: Requiring personal flotation devices for children on certain recreational vessels.

Committee: Natural Resources

Sponsor(s): Representatives Carlson, Pennington, Radcliffe

Background: No person may operate a vessel on the waters of the state without having a personal flotation device such as a life jacket on board for each person on the vessel. Each flotation device must be in serviceable condition, of appropriate size, and readily accessible.

Generally, state law requires boaters to have a life jacket or other flotation device on board the vessel for each person rather than requiring boaters actually to wear a flotation device. There are, however, some exceptions to this general rule. For example, water skiers, personal watercraft users, and participants on vessels carrying passengers for hire on whitewater rivers all must wear personal flotation devices.

Summary: No person may operate or permit to be operated a vessel under 19 feet in length unless each child nine years of age or younger on the vessel wears a U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device. Enforcement of this requirement by law enforcement officers may be accomplished only as a secondary action if the vessel is detained for a suspected violation of some other provision of law.

*Prepared by Linda Byers (786-7129)
House Natural Resources Committee
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