

Committee Substitute for
Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 1958

An act relating to airboats; amending s. 327.02, F.S.; defining the terms “airboat” and “muffler”; conforming terminology; creating s. 327.391, F.S.; providing for the regulation of airboat operation and equipment; requiring a sound-muffling device, as described; requiring the display of flags, as described; providing penalties; amending s. 327.60, F.S.; prohibiting an ordinance or local law from discriminating against airboats; providing an exception; amending s. 327.73, F.S.; providing penalties; amending s. 327.731, F.S.; providing for mandatory education; amending ss. 320.08, 328.17, 342.07, and 715.07, F.S.; correcting cross-references; amending s. 713.78, F.S.; correcting cross-references and conforming terminology; amending s. 616.242, F.S.; conforming terminology; providing effective dates.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Present subsections (1) through (22) of section 327.02, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as subsections (2) through (23), respectively, subsections (23) through (38) of that section are redesignated as subsections (25) through (40), respectively, new subsections (1) and (24) are added to that section, and present subsection (37) of that section is amended, to read:

327.02 Definitions of terms used in this chapter and in chapter 328.—As used in this chapter and in chapter 328, unless the context clearly requires a different meaning, the term:

(1) “Airboat” means a vessel that is primarily designed for use in shallow waters and powered by an internal combustion engine with an airplane-type propeller mounted above the stern and used to push air across a set of rudders.

(24) “Muffler” means an automotive-style sound-suppression device or system designed to effectively abate the sound of exhaust gases emitted from an internal combustion engine and prevent excessive sound when installed on such an engine.

(39)(37) “Vessel” is synonymous with boat as referenced in s. 1(b), Art. VII of the State Constitution and includes every description of watercraft, barge, and airboat ~~air boat~~, other than a seaplane on the water, used or capable of being used as a means of transportation on water.

Section 2. Section 327.391, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

327.391 Airboats regulated.—

(1) The exhaust of every internal combustion engine used on any airboat operated on the waters of this state shall be provided with an automotive-style factory muffler, underwater exhaust, or other manufactured device capable of adequately muffling the sound of the exhaust of the engine as

described in s. 327.02(24). The use of cutouts or flex pipe as the sole source of muffling is prohibited, except as provided in subsection (4). Any person who violates this subsection commits a noncriminal infraction punishable as provided in s. 327.73(1).

(2) An airboat operator cited for an infraction of subsection (1) may not operate the airboat until a muffler as defined in s. 327.02 is installed.

(3) An airboat may not operate on the waters of the state unless it is equipped with a mast or flagpole bearing a flag at a height of at least 10 feet above the lowest portion of the vessel. The flag must be square or rectangular, at least 10 inches by 12 inches in size, international orange in color, and displayed so that the visibility of the flag is not obscured in any direction. Any person who violates this subsection commits a noncriminal infraction punishable as provided in s. 327.73(1).

(4) This section does not apply to a person participating in an event for which a permit is required, or of which notice must be given, under s. 327.48.

Section 3. Effective July 1, 2006, subsection (1) of section 327.60, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

327.60 Local regulations; limitations.—

(1) The provisions of ss. 327.01, 327.02, 327.30-327.40, 327.44-327.50, 327.54, 327.56, 327.65, 328.40-328.48, 328.52-328.58, 328.62, and 328.64 shall govern the operation, equipment, and all other matters relating thereto whenever any vessel shall be operated upon the waterways or when any activity regulated hereby shall take place thereon. Nothing in these sections shall be construed to prevent the adoption of any ordinance or local law relating to operation and equipment of vessels, except that no such ordinance or local law may apply to the Florida Intracoastal Waterway and except that such ordinances or local laws shall be operative only when they are not in conflict with this chapter or any amendments thereto or regulations thereunder. Any ordinance or local law which has been adopted pursuant to this section or to any other state law may not discriminate against personal watercraft as defined in s. 327.02. Effective July 1, 2006, any ordinance or local law adopted pursuant to this section or any other state law may not discriminate against airboats except by a two-thirds vote of the governing body enacting such ordinance.

Section 4. Paragraphs (v) and (w) are added to subsection (1) of section 327.73, Florida Statutes, to read:

327.73 Noncriminal infractions.—

(1) Violations of the following provisions of the vessel laws of this state are noncriminal infractions:

(v) Section 327.391(1), relating to the requirement for an adequate muffler on an airboat.

(w) Section 327.391(3), relating to the display of a flag on an airboat.

Any person cited for a violation of any such provision shall be deemed to be charged with a noncriminal infraction, shall be cited for such an infraction, and shall be cited to appear before the county court. The civil penalty for any such infraction is \$50, except as otherwise provided in this section. Any person who fails to appear or otherwise properly respond to a uniform boating citation shall, in addition to the charge relating to the violation of the boating laws of this state, be charged with the offense of failing to respond to such citation and, upon conviction, be guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083. A written warning to this effect shall be provided at the time such uniform boating citation is issued.

Section 5. Subsection (1) of section 327.731, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

327.731 Mandatory education for violators.—

(1) Every person convicted of a criminal violation of this chapter, every person convicted of a noncriminal infraction under this chapter if the infraction resulted in a reportable boating accident, and every person convicted of two noncriminal infractions as defined in s. 327.73(1)(h)-(k), (m), (o), (p), and (s)-~~(w)~~~~(u)~~, said infractions occurring within a 12-month period, must:

(a) Enroll in, attend, and successfully complete, at his or her own expense, a boating safety course that meets minimum standards established by the commission by rule; however, the commission may provide by rule pursuant to chapter 120 for waivers of the attendance requirement for violators residing in areas where classroom presentation of the course is not available;

(b) File with the commission within 90 days proof of successful completion of the course;

(c) Refrain from operating a vessel until he or she has filed the proof of successful completion of the course with the commission.

Any person who has successfully completed an approved boating course shall be exempt from these provisions upon showing proof to the commission as specified in paragraph (b).

Section 6. Paragraphs (d) and (e) of subsection (5) of section 320.08, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

320.08 License taxes.—Except as otherwise provided herein, there are hereby levied and imposed annual license taxes for the operation of motor vehicles, mopeds, motorized bicycles as defined in s. 316.003(2), and mobile homes, as defined in s. 320.01, which shall be paid to and collected by the department or its agent upon the registration or renewal of registration of the following:

(5) SEMITRAILERS, FEES ACCORDING TO GROSS VEHICLE WEIGHT; SCHOOL BUSES; SPECIAL PURPOSE VEHICLES.—

(d) A wrecker, as defined in s. 320.01(40), which is used to tow a vessel as defined in s. 327.02(39) ~~s. 327.02(36)~~, a disabled, abandoned, stolen-recovered, or impounded motor vehicle as defined in s. 320.01(38), or a replacement motor vehicle as defined in s. 320.01(39): \$30 flat.

(e) A wrecker, as defined in s. 320.01(40), which is used to tow any motor vehicle, regardless of whether or not such motor vehicle is a disabled motor vehicle as defined in s. 320.01(38), a replacement motor vehicle as defined in s. 320.01(39), a vessel as defined in s. 327.02(39) ~~s. 327.02(36)~~, or any other cargo, as follows:

1. Gross vehicle weight of 10,000 pounds or more, but less than 15,000 pounds: \$87 flat.

2. Gross vehicle weight of 15,000 pounds or more, but less than 20,000 pounds: \$131 flat.

3. Gross vehicle weight of 20,000 pounds or more, but less than 26,000 pounds: \$186 flat.

4. Gross vehicle weight of 26,000 pounds or more, but less than 35,000 pounds: \$240 flat.

5. Gross vehicle weight of 35,000 pounds or more, but less than 44,000 pounds: \$300 flat.

6. Gross vehicle weight of 44,000 pounds or more, but less than 55,000 pounds: \$572 flat.

7. Gross vehicle weight of 55,000 pounds or more, but less than 62,000 pounds: \$678 flat.

8. Gross vehicle weight of 62,000 pounds or more, but less than 72,000 pounds: \$800 flat.

9. Gross vehicle weight of 72,000 pounds or more: \$979 flat.

Section 7. Subsection (4) of section 328.17, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

328.17 Nonjudicial sale of vessels.—

(4) A marina, as defined in s. 327.02(20) ~~s. 327.02(19)~~, shall have a possessory lien upon any vessel for storage fees, dockage fees, repairs, improvements, or other work-related storage charges, and for expenses necessary for preservation of the vessel or expenses reasonably incurred in the sale or other disposition of the vessel. The possessory lien shall attach as of the date the vessel is brought to the marina, or as of the date the vessel first occupies rental space at the marina facility. However, in the event of default, the marina must give notice to persons who hold perfected security interests against the vessel under the Uniform Commercial Code in which the owner is named as the debtor.

Section 8. Subsection (2) of section 342.07, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

342.07 Recreational and commercial working waterfronts; legislative findings; definitions.—

(2) As used in this section, the term “recreational and commercial working waterfront” means a parcel or parcels of real property that provide access for water-dependent commercial activities or provide access for the public to the navigable waters of the state. Recreational and commercial working waterfronts require direct access to or a location on, over, or adjacent to a navigable body of water. The term includes water-dependent facilities that are open to the public and offer public access by vessels to the waters of the state or that are support facilities for recreational, commercial, research, or governmental vessels. These facilities include docks, wharfs, lifts, wet and dry marinas, boat ramps, boat hauling and repair facilities, commercial fishing facilities, boat construction facilities, and other support structures over the water. As used in this section, the term “vessel” has the same meaning as in s. 327.02(39) ~~s. 327.02(37)~~. Seaports are excluded from the definition.

Section 9. Paragraph (a) of subsection (10) of section 616.242, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

616.242 Safety standards for amusement rides.—

(10) EXEMPTIONS.—

(a) This section does not apply to:

1. Permanent facilities that employ at least 1,000 full-time employees and that maintain full-time, in-house safety inspectors. Furthermore, the permanent facilities must file an affidavit of the annual inspection with the department, on a form prescribed by rule of the department. Additionally, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services may consult annually with the permanent facilities regarding industry safety programs.

2. Any playground operated by a school, local government, or business licensed under chapter 509, if the playground is an incidental amenity and the operating entity is not primarily engaged in providing amusement, pleasure, thrills, or excitement.

3. Museums or other institutions principally devoted to the exhibition of products of agriculture, industry, education, science, religion, or the arts.

4. Conventions or trade shows for the sale or exhibit of amusement rides if there are a minimum of 15 amusement rides on display or exhibition, and if any operation of such amusement rides is limited to the registered attendees of the convention or trade show.

5. Skating rinks, arcades, lazer or paint ball war games, bowling alleys, miniature golf courses, mechanical bulls, inflatable rides, trampolines, ball crawls, exercise equipment, jet skis, paddle boats, airboats ~~air boats~~, helicopters, airplanes, parasails, hot air or helium balloons whether tethered or untethered, theatres, batting cages, stationary spring-mounted fixtures, rider-propelled merry-go-rounds, games, side shows, live animal rides, or live animal shows.

6. Go-karts operated in competitive sporting events if participation is not open to the public.

7. Nonmotorized playground equipment that is not required to have a manager.

8. Coin-actuated amusement rides designed to be operated by depositing coins, tokens, credit cards, debit cards, bills, or other cash money and which are not required to have a manager, and which have a capacity of six persons or less.

9. Facilities described in s. 549.09(1)(a) when such facilities are operating cars, trucks, or motorcycles only.

10. Battery-powered cars or other vehicles that are designed to be operated by children 7 years of age or under and that cannot exceed a speed of 4 miles per hour.

11. Mechanically driven vehicles that pull train cars, carts, wagons, or other similar vehicles, that are not confined to a metal track or confined to an area but are steered by an operator and do not exceed a speed of 4 miles per hour.

Section 10. Paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section 713.78, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

713.78 Liens for recovering, towing, or storing vehicles and vessels.—

(1) For the purposes of this section, the term:

(b) “Vessel” means every description of watercraft, barge, and airboat ~~air boat~~ used or capable of being used as a means of transportation on water, other than a seaplane or a “documented vessel” as defined in s. 327.02(9) ~~s. 327.02(8)~~.

Section 11. Paragraph (b) of subsection (1) of section 715.07, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

715.07 Vehicles or vessels parked on private property; towing.—

(1) As used in this section, the term:

(b) “Vessel” means every description of watercraft, barge, and airboat used or capable of being used as a means of transportation on water, other than a seaplane or a “documented vessel” as defined in s. 327.02(9) ~~s. 327.02(8)~~.

Section 12. Except as otherwise expressly provided in this act and except for this section, which shall take effect upon becoming a law, this act shall take effect October 1, 2006.

Approved by the Governor June 12, 2006.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 12, 2006.