



Substitute Senate Bill No. 136

Public Act No. 16-187

**AN ACT REGULATING THE USE OF JETTED ARTICULATED
VESSELS AND CERTAIN WATER SKIING DEVICES.**

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

Section 1. Section 15-127 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

As used in this part unless the context otherwise requires: "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection; "federal waters" means the navigable waters of the United States within the territorial limits of the state; "state waters" means all waters within the territorial limits of the state except federal waters; "vessel" means every description of watercraft, other than a seaplane on water, used or capable of being used as a means of transportation on water; "motorboat" means any vessel, not more than sixty-five feet in length and propelled by machinery, whether or not such machinery is the principal source of propulsion; "sailboat" means any vessel propelled by sail alone; "sailboard" means any sailboat whose unsupported mast is connected by a swivel or a flexible universal joint to a hull similar to the hull of a surfboard; ["water-skiing"] "water skiing" includes [aquaplaning,] towing of any person behind a vessel under power, whether such person is connected by a towing line to such vessel or not, and similar forms of activity in which

Substitute Senate Bill No. 136

a passenger exits a vessel and uses the suction or wake of the underway vessel to engage in the activity; "operate" means to navigate or otherwise use a vessel; a vessel is "under way" when it is not moored, anchored, made fast to the shore or aground; "person" means any individual, partnership, firm, association, limited liability company, corporation or other entity; "town" includes city, town, borough and any other political subdivision of the state; "masthead light" means a white light placed over the fore and aft centerline of the vessel aft of and higher than the side lights and forward of the stern light showing an unbroken light over an arc of the horizon of 225 degrees and so fixed as to show the light from right ahead to 22.5 degrees abaft the beam on either side of the vessel; "side light" means a green light on the starboard side or a red light on the port side, placed forward of the stern light and as near as practicable to the bow of the vessel, each showing an unbroken light over an arc of the horizon of 112.5 degrees and so fixed as to show the light from right ahead to 22.5 degrees abaft the beam on its respective side, except that on a vessel of less than twenty meters in length the side lights may be combined in one lantern carried on the fore and aft centerline of the vessel; "stern light" means a white light placed as near as practicable to the stern showing an unbroken light over an arc of the horizon of 135 degrees and so fixed as to show the light 67.5 degrees from right aft on each side of the vessel; "all-around light" means a light showing an unbroken light over an arc of the horizon 360 degrees; "anchor light" means an all-around white light exhibited forward and displayed where it can best be seen; [and] "international regulations" means the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972, including annexes currently in force for the United States; and "jetted articulated vessel" or "JAV" means any vessel that consists of a base pumping unit used to generate water or other media under pressure, an articulated hose used to convey media under pressure or a jointed or flexible conduit used to convey such media and a device through which high-pressure media is ejected for the purpose of propelling,

Substitute Senate Bill No. 136

elevating or submerging an operator or passenger.

Sec. 2. Section 15-140j of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) As used in this section, "personal watercraft" is any inboard powered vessel less than sixteen feet in length [which] that has an internal combustion engine powering a water-jet pump as its primary source of motor propulsion and [which] that is designed to be operated by a person sitting, standing or kneeling on the vessel, rather than the conventional manner of sitting or standing inside the vessel, "jetted articulated vessel" or "JAV" has the same meaning as provided in section 15-127, as amended by this act, and "operator of a JAV" means any person who, in whole or in part, from such person's position on the JAV can: (1) Energize or de-energize the JAV, or (2) control or partially control the thrust, speed or direction of the JAV.

(b) No person shall operate a personal watercraft or a JAV unless such person has been issued a certificate of personal watercraft operation by the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection. No person less than sixteen years of age shall operate a JAV. No owner of a personal watercraft or a JAV shall knowingly authorize or permit a person who is less than sixteen years of age who does not have a certificate of personal watercraft operation issued by the commissioner to operate such personal watercraft or JAV on the waters of the state. Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, the commissioner may modify or suspend, [requirements for a certificate of personal watercraft operation by written authorization with respect to any marine event authorized by the commissioner or upon receipt of] by written permission, any age or certification requirement set forth in this section for the purpose of a marine event held pursuant to section 15-140b. In those waters where the United States Coast Guard has jurisdiction over marine events, such permit shall not be valid unless and until the commissioner receives a copy of the United States

Substitute Senate Bill No. 136

Coast Guard authorization for a marine event.

(c) A certificate of personal watercraft operation shall be issued under subsection (b) of this section to any applicant who provides proof that such applicant has: (1) Successfully completed a combined course in safe boating operation and safe personal watercraft handling approved by the commissioner, which courses include, but are not limited to, courses offered by the United States Power Squadrons, Coast Guard Auxiliary or other similar organization, (2) been issued or has satisfied the requirements for issuance of a safe boating certificate and successfully completed a course in safe personal watercraft handling approved by the commissioner, which include, but are not limited to, courses offered by the United States Power Squadrons, Coast Guard Auxiliary or other similar organization, or (3) successfully passed an equivalency examination testing knowledge of safe boating operation and safe personal watercraft handling administered by the commissioner.

(d) The commissioner may adopt regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, establishing the content of courses in safe personal watercraft handling. Such regulations may include provisions for examinations, issuance of certificates of personal watercraft operation and establishment of a reasonable fee for such course and examination and for the issuance of a certificate and duplicate certificate.

(e) Notwithstanding subsection (b) of this section, any person who purchases a new or used personal watercraft may, upon vessel registration, apply to the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection for a temporary certificate of personal watercraft operation [which] that shall be valid for three months from the date of registration, provided the applicant has successfully completed a course in safe personal watercraft handling prior to application for the temporary certificate. No person shall be issued more than one

Substitute Senate Bill No. 136

temporary certificate of personal watercraft operation.

(f) The commissioner may enter into a reciprocal agreement with any other state [which] that has a similar safe personal watercraft handling certificate program [which] that the commissioner deems acceptable for purposes of this subsection. Any person who successfully completes a course in safe personal watercraft handling and holds a certificate or license from another state [which] that has such a reciprocal agreement with the commissioner may operate a personal watercraft on the waters of this state.

(g) Any person required to obtain a certificate of personal watercraft operation pursuant to this section shall have such certificate on board at all times while operating a personal watercraft. On demand of an officer authorized to enforce the provisions of this chapter, such person shall exhibit the certificate to the officer.

(h) No passenger shall be permitted to ride in front of the operator on a personal watercraft. No passenger shall be permitted to ride upon a personal watercraft unless the passenger is able to securely hold onto the person in front of them or to the handholds on the personal watercraft, and is able to keep both feet on the deck of the personal watercraft so as to maintain balance while the personal watercraft is in operation.

(i) Unless otherwise authorized by the commissioner pursuant to section 15-140b, no person shall operate a JAV in any slow-no-wake area except to transit such slow-no-wake area. No person shall operate a JAV within two hundred feet of any dock, shore, pier or fixed structure or within one hundred feet of any vessel except to directly transit the area of such dock, shore, pier, fixed structure or vessel.

~~(i)~~ (j) No person shall teach a course in safe personal watercraft handling that satisfies the requirements for issuance of a certificate of

Substitute Senate Bill No. 136

personal watercraft operation unless the commissioner has approved such course.

[(j)] (k) No Department of Energy and Environmental Protection agent or employee shall use department safe personal watercraft handling course materials for personal financial gain.

[(k)] (l) Any person who violates any provision of this section shall be fined not less than sixty dollars or more than two hundred fifty dollars for each such violation.

[(l)] (m) A certificate of personal watercraft operation may be suspended or revoked in accordance with the provisions of section 15-132a, 15-133, 15-140l or 15-140n.

Approved June 9, 2016