

2026 -- H 7915

LC005355

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO WATERS AND NAVIGATION -- REGULATION OF BOATS

Introduced By: Representatives Chippendale, Place, Santucci, Cotter, Handy, Carson, Tanzi, Noret, Bennett, and Edwards

Date Introduced: February 27, 2026

Referred To: House Environment and Natural Resources

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 46-22-4 of the General Laws in Chapter 46-22 entitled "Regulation  
2 of Boats" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **46-22-4. Identification number and registration fee.**

4 (a)(1) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (b), the owner of each motorboat shall  
5 file biennially an application for registration with the department of environmental management on  
6 forms approved by the director. The application shall be accompanied by a registration fee  
7 according to the following schedule:

8 OVERALL LENGTH AT	NOT MORE THAN FEET	BIENNIAL FEE
9 LEAST FEET UNDER	15	\$30
10 16	20	\$40
11 21	25	\$60
12 26	30	\$100
13 31	35	\$200
14 36	40	\$250
15 41	45	\$300
16 46	50	\$400
17 51 and over		\$600

18 (i) For the purpose of the above fee schedule, "overall length" shall be defined as the  
19 horizontal distance between the foremost part of the stem, and, the aftermost part of the stern,

1 excluding bowsprits, bumpkins, rudders, outboard motor brackets, and similar fittings or  
2 attachments. For purposes of this section, a fraction of a foot shall be deemed to be the next higher  
3 foot.

4 (ii) The fee payable under this section for any motorboat owned by a nonprofit organization  
5 shall not exceed fifty dollars (\$50.00).

6 (iii) All vessels over thirty feet (30') may, upon request, pay the registration fee annually  
7 at the rate of one-half (1/2) the biennial fee for a vessel of the same length.

8 (iv) In addition to the registration fee payable under this section, the owner of each  
9 motorboat shall pay five dollars (\$5.00) biennially. Pursuant to this section, where the owner of a  
10 motorboat pays an annual registration fee, the additional fee shall be two dollars and fifty cents  
11 (\$2.50) annually. The additional fees shall be deposited in a restricted account for freshwater  
12 preservation as set forth in § 46-33-3.

13 (2) Upon receipt of the completed application and correct registration fee, the department  
14 of environmental management shall enter the application and registration fee into its records, and  
15 issue to the owner a certificate of number stating the number awarded to the motorboat and the  
16 name and address of the owner. The owner shall paint on or attach to each side of the bow of the  
17 motorboat the identification number in such manner as may be prescribed by rules and regulations  
18 of the department of environmental management in order that it may be clearly visible. The number  
19 shall be maintained in legible condition. The certificate of number shall be pocket size and shall be  
20 available at all times for inspection on the motorboat for which issued, whenever that motorboat is  
21 in operation.

22 (b) The owner of any motorboat already covered by an identification number, in full force  
23 and effect, which has been awarded to it pursuant to then operative federal law or a federally  
24 approved numbering system of another state, shall record the number with the department of  
25 environmental management prior to operating the motorboat on the waters of this state in excess of  
26 the ninety (90) day reciprocity period provided for in § 46-22-6(a). The recordation shall be in the  
27 manner and subject to the procedure and fees required for the award and transfer of a number under  
28 subsections (a) and (c) through (i), except that no additional or substitute number shall be issued.

29 (c) Should the ownership of a motorboat change, a new application form shall be filed with  
30 the department of environmental management. Should the change in ownership take place before  
31 the date upon which the certificate of number expires, the new owner shall pay an administrative  
32 fee of ten dollars (\$10.00). The number assigned to the vessel shall remain with the vessel and be  
33 non-transferable while the vessel remains certified in the state of Rhode Island; provided, however,  
34 that upon the request of the owner of a duly registered vessel of historic value that is more than

1 fifty (50) years old, the number assigned to the vessel may be transferred to a different historic  
2 vessel owned by the same person. The original vessel will be given a new registration number and  
3 the owner shall pay a transfer fee of six dollars (\$6.00) for each vessel.

4 (d) In the event that an agency of the United States government shall have in force an  
5 overall system of identification numbering for motorboats within the United States, the numbering  
6 system employed pursuant to this chapter by the department of environmental management shall  
7 be in conformity therewith.

8 (e) All records of the department of environmental management made or kept pursuant to  
9 this section shall be public records.

10 (f) The department of environmental management shall fix a day and month of the year on  
11 which the certificate of number is due to expire and no longer be of any force and effect, unless  
12 renewed pursuant to this chapter.

13 (g) The owner shall furnish the department of environmental management notice of the  
14 transfer of all or any part of the owner's interest, other than the creation of a security interest in a  
15 motorboat numbered in this state, pursuant to subsections (a) and (b), or of the destruction or  
16 abandonment of the motorboat, within fifteen (15) days thereof. That destruction shall terminate  
17 the certificate of number for the motorboat.

18 (h) Any holder of a certificate of number shall notify the department of environmental  
19 management within fifteen (15) days if the holder's address no longer conforms to the address  
20 appearing on the certificate and shall, as a part of the notification, furnish the department of  
21 environmental management the new address. The department of environmental management may  
22 provide, in its rules and regulations, for the surrender of the certificate bearing the former address  
23 or for the alteration of an outstanding certificate to show the new address of the holder.

24 (i) No number, other than the number awarded to a motorboat or granted reciprocity  
25 pursuant to this chapter, shall be painted, attached, or otherwise displayed on either side of the bow  
26 of the motorboat.

27 (j) Biennial registration shall be phased in, alphabetically, over a two (2) year period  
28 starting January 1, 1999 at which time all owners whose last names begin with the letters "A"  
29 through "M" applications for registration will be accepted for consideration on a biennial basis.  
30 Owners whose last names begin with the letters "N" through "Z" shall be subject to biennial  
31 registration starting January 1, 2000.

32 SECTION 2. Chapter 46-33 of the General Laws entitled "Freshwater Lake Management  
33 Program" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

34 **46-33-3. Establishment of restricted receipt account -- Collection and deposit of fees.**

1           All fees collected by the director in accordance with § 46-22-4(a)(iv) shall be placed in a  
2 restricted receipt account to be known as the "Rhode Island lake management program fund" for  
3 the specific purposes of providing funding necessary to implement the provisions of this chapter  
4 pursuant to rules and regulations promulgated by the department for the spending of the deposits  
5 collected by the fund.

6           SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

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1           This act would authorize the collection of a small additional fee, in addition to the  
2 registration fee paid by motorboat owners, to be deposited in a restricted account, in order to fund  
3 the newly established freshwater lake management program.

4           This act would take effect upon passage.

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