

sSB 136

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

SUMMARY:

This bill establishes requirements for operators of jetted articulated vessels (JAVs) similar to the requirements for operators of personal watercraft (PWC, e.g., jet skis). Violators of the requirements are subject to a \$60 to \$250 fine for each violation.

The bill defines a JAV as a watercraft with a base pumping unit - often a modified PWC - that uses an articulated hose or jointed or flexible conduit to convey water or other media under pressure through a device that ejects the high-pressure media to propel, elevate, or submerge the operator or passenger. A JAV operator includes anyone on the JAV who can energize or de-energize it or control its thrust, speed, or direction.

Under the bill, in order to operate a JAV, a person must be at least age 16 and hold a certificate of personal watercraft operation (CPWO) (see BACKGROUND). The bill prohibits a JAV owner from knowingly allowing someone under age 16 without a CPWO to operate a JAV. But it allows the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner to modify or suspend the age requirement in writing for certain authorized marine events (e.g., parades, exhibitions, tournaments). By law, he may already suspend or modify the CPWO requirement for marine events.

The bill prohibits a person from operating a JAV in a slow-no-wake area except to transit the area, unless the DEEP commissioner allows it for a marine event. It also prohibits a person from operating a JAV within 200 feet of a dock, shore, pier, or fixed structure or within 100 feet of any vessel, except to transit the area.

The bill also extends the definition of water skiing to include watersports performed behind a vessel whether or not the person is connected by a towing line to the vessel (e.g., wake surfing). By doing so, it subjects such watersport participants to existing water skiing requirements (see below). The bill prohibits a person from operating a vessel engaged in water skiing (1) in a way that causes wakes to damage or injure property or people or (2) if the aggregate number of water skiers and vessel occupants exceeds the vessel manufacturer's specified carrying capacity.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage