

CS for HB 93 (FIN)

Sponsor Statement

Boating Safety Act Reauthorization

Between 1965 and 1987, every state and territory except Alaska successfully established a comprehensive boating safety program. During this same time period, Alaska consistently suffered from the worst recreational boating fatality rate in the nation – over 10 times the national average. Finally, in 2000, [HB 108](#), the [Alaska Boating Safety Act](#), sponsored by Representative Bill Hudson, was signed into law after 11 successive attempts at passage.

The Act did two things: it consolidated boating regulatory functions and it created a steady funding source for boater education program for the state of Alaska. Funding for the new registration function is derived from federal motor fuel taxes collected in Alaska as well as revenues from the boat registration program.

Proceeding cautiously, the 21st Legislature added repealing language for the program if the state did not receive the anticipated federal marine fuel funds. If the future funding stream did not come through, the 2005 sunset would take effect and the comprehensive boating safety education program would face termination.

Essentially, it was left to a future legislature to verify the funding stream was indeed in place. The Sponsor of [HB 93](#) states that as expected, the federal funds for the boater education component are in place and the sunset provisions of the Alaska Boating Safety Act can be dropped. The House Transportation Committee eliminated the single-most controversial provision of the Boater Safety Act: the requirement for registration of non-powered boats. This revision can be accomplished without impacting any federal funding to the state's boater education programs. Additionally, the House Finance Committee re-inserted the sunset provision for this program, in effect extending the sunset date until 2010.

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