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April 2016

Florida Passes Anchoring Restriction Bill: As reported by Trade Only Today - The Florida Senate voted 36-2, to adopt a House-initiated bill that would limit anchoring at five locations in Broward and Miami-Dade counties. The House approved the measure by a vote of 105-12. The bill now goes to Gov. Rick Scott for his signature. He has seven days to sign or veto it. If he signs the bill, it will take effect July 1.

HB 1051 prohibits anchoring from one-half hour after sunset until one-half hour before sunrise on the Middle River between N.E. 21st Court and the Intracoastal Waterway in Broward County; Sunset Lake in Miami-Dade County; and the sections of Biscayne Bay in Miami-Dade County between Rivo Alto Island and Di Lido Island, San Marino Island and San Marco Island, and San Marco Island and Biscayne Island.

The bill gives vessel operators some reprieve from the bill restrictions if their boat suffers a dangerous mechanical failure, if weather conditions pose a risk, if they move their boat, or if they are attending a special event. Recreational and commercial fishermen actively engaged in fishing; government, law enforcement, military and fire-rescue boats; and construction and dredge vessels on active jobs would be exempted from the rule.

The bill makes the case that these waters should be exempt because they are in “densely populated urban areas which have narrow state waterways, residential docking facilities and significant recreational boating traffic.” These also are anchorages where there has been user conflict between boaters and waterfront property owners, who say boaters anchor behind their homes for weeks at a time and are an eyesore and a nuisance. The bill contains a provision that will remove these anchoring restrictions once statewide anchoring regulations are enacted.

In a letter on March 15, 2016, to Governor Scott, Margaret Podlich, President of BoatUS said: “Allowing a select few to carve out their own special anchoring restrictions, and bypassing a pilot program designed to provide practical, uniform anchoring statewide is a mistake” and is asking the Governor to veto HB 1051.

Virginia Legislation Calls for E0 at Marinas: As reported by NMMA, the Natural Resources Committee in Virginia unanimously supported a bill calling for an exemption from the EPA’s ethanol mandates to allow marinas to sell gasoline without ethanol, so called E-0. SB 557 now goes before the House Natural Resources Committee for its consideration. NMMA supports the bill.

The bill reads as follows: **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:** That the Department of Environmental Quality be directed to seek from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) an exemption from the federal reformulated gasoline (RFG) program for the sale by a qualifying marina of conventional ethanol-free gasoline. A qualifying marina shall be one that sells gasoline exclusively to the marine recreational or commercial trade. No ethanol-free gasoline sold by such marina shall be used in any road vehicle.