



Rhode Island Marine Trades Association  
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May 6, 2025

The Honorable Stephen Casey  
Chair, House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

**Re: H6186 – Houseboat Task Force**

Chairman Casey and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to express the Rhode Island Marine Trades Association's (RIMTA) perspective on pending matters related to Houseboats. RIMTA is a non-profit trade organization serving approximately 300-member businesses within the Rhode Island recreational boating industry including marinas and boatyards, marine manufacturers, marine construction companies, vessel operators and professional services, which collectively support in excess of 13,000 jobs in Rhode Island.

Legislation has been introduced in the last three session seeking to redefine and overhaul the regulatory framework impacting Houseboats. While well-intended by proponents, RIMTA continues to raise concern and opposition to the solutions presented by proponents due to the potential harm posed to our marine economy, unintended or otherwise.

RIMTA has remained engaged with stakeholders, however, including outreach with all proposed members of the proposed Task Force, in both individual and joint meetings and discussions, and has presented comprehensive alternative legislative approaches to address Houseboats. The informal task force last met on February 28<sup>th</sup>, where RIMTA provided an updated proposal for feedback, a copy of which is attached hereto for your consideration, which:

- 1) Updates definitions to recognize the difference between a “residential watercraft” and a modern houseboat vessel as defined by US Coast Guard regulations.
- 2) Provides local authority to regulate residential watercrafts anywhere in municipal waters, including CRMC designated marina boundaries.
- 3) Provides local authority to municipalities to regulate houseboats, with the exception of what is inside CRMC designated marina boundaries.
- 4) Provides clear and uniform supremacy clause authority for CRMC and DEM.
- 5) Reforms municipal ordinance penalty provisions and updates fines for inflation.



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- 6) Prohibits people from living on houseboats or residential watercrafts on any coastal ponds.
- 7) Requires residential watercrafts moored in the state to tie into marina holding take pump out facilities.
- 8) Authorizes municipal regulation by ordinance of the short-term rental of residential watercrafts and houseboats offered for tourist or transient occupancy through a hosting platform.

RIMTA is committed to protecting recreation boating as an essential industry in Rhode Island, and welcomes further engagement with stakeholders, including substantive responses and oversees to the proposed Sub A. We respectfully oppose, however, establishing a Houseboat Task Force, particularly one that does not fairly balance stakeholder representation, as such formality and structure could unduly complicate and delay resolution of the matter, and is not necessary as RIMTA remains ever ready to discuss and work on this matter. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Brian Dursi  
Executive Director  
Rhode Island Marine Trade Association

**2025 – H 5190 / S 260 PROPOSED SUB A - RIMTA**

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

**IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025**

AN ACT

RELATING TO TAXATION – LEVY AND ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL TAXES

Introduced By:

Date Introduced:

Referred To:

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 44-5-25.1 of the General Laws in Chapter 44-5 entitled “Levy and Assessment of Local Taxes” is hereby amended to read as follows:

**44-5-25.1. ~~Houseboats~~ Residential watercrafts — Taxation — Definitions.**

All ~~houseboats~~ residential watercrafts being used as a principal or temporary place of residence or domicile by a person shall be taxed as personal property by the local tax assessor. For the purposes of this section, ~~“houseboat”~~ “residential watercraft” means a watercraft or an industrial or commercial structure, constructed on a float, raft, or barge, on or in the waters of the state, floating or nonfloating, which is designed or remodeled as a place of habitation and is not principally used for transportation, and this definition includes platforms and waterborne hotels and restaurants; “local tax assessor”, for the purposes of this section, means the assessor for the city or town within whose harbor line the houseboat is physically situated.

SECTION 2. Sections 46-4-6.1, 46-4-6.2, 46-4-6.3, 46-4-6.4, 46-4-6.5, 46-4-6.6, 46-4-6.7, 46-4-6.8, 46-4-6.9, 46-4-6.10, 46-4-6.11, 46-4-6.12, 46-4-6.13, 46-4-6.14, 46-4-6.15, 46-4-6.16, and 46-4-6.17 of the General Laws in Chapter 46-4 entitled “Harbors and Harbor Lines” are hereby amended as follows:

**46-4-6.1. Town of Barrington — Powers conferred.**

(a) The provision of § 46-22-14 or any other provisions of the general laws notwithstanding and in addition to any authority and powers conferred upon the town council of the town of Barrington authority shall also be granted to the town council of the town of Barrington to regulate by ordinance the speed, management, and control of all vessels and the size, type, location, and use of all anchorages and moorings within the public waters within the confines of the town, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the authority and power to prohibit waterskiing on any of the public waters, to provide regulations for houseboats that are not within the boundaries of a coastal resources management council authorized marina, to provide regulations for residential watercrafts, and to impose penalties for violation of the ordinances, not exceeding in amount ~~one hundred dollars (\$100)~~ five hundred dollars (\$500) ~~or imprisonment not exceeding ten (10) days in some jail or house of correction,~~ for any one offense; and the fines to be recovered to the use of the town.

(b) No powers or duties granted herein shall be construed to abrogate the powers or duties granted to the coastal resources management council as provided in chapter 23 of this title, as amended, or the department of environmental management as provided in chapter 17.1 of title 42 or chapters 12 and 22 of title 46.

**46-4-6.2. Town of Bristol — Powers conferred.**

(a) The provisions of § 46-22-14 or any other provisions of the general laws notwithstanding and in addition to any authority and powers conferred upon the town council of the town of Bristol, authority shall also be granted to the town council of the town of Bristol to enact ordinances as the town council may deem necessary or desirable for the enforcement and supervision of any rules and regulations established by the town council governing the public waters and harbors within its jurisdiction, and to regulate by ordinance the speed, management, and control of all vessels and the size, type, location, and use of all

anchorage and moorage within the public waters within the confines of the town, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the authority and power to regulate waterskiing upon any of the public waters; to designate upon a map of the public waters within the town the places where permanent or temporary moorings or anchorages may be maintained; to assign moorings; to remove moorings; to collect fees for the use of moorings; to provide for minimum mooring specifications; to provide for inspection of moorings; to provide regulations for houseboats that are not ~~self-propelled~~ within the boundaries of a coastal resources management council authorized marina, to provide regulations for residential watercrafts; to provide regulations for regattas, races, marine parades, tournaments, and exhibitions; and to provide for the removal of wrecks or derelict or abandoned boats or docks; to provide for the regulation of skin diving and scuba diving; and to impose penalties for violation of the ordinances not exceeding in amount ~~one hundred dollars (\$100)~~ five hundred dollars (\$500) ~~or imprisonment not exceeding ten (10) days in some jail or house of correction~~ for any one offense and the fines to be recovered to the use of the town.

(b) No powers or duties granted herein shall be construed to abrogate the powers or duties granted to the coastal resources management council as provided in chapter 23 of this title, as amended, or the department of environmental management as provided in chapter 17.1 of title 42 or chapters 12 and 22 of title 46.

#### **46-4-6.3. Town of South Kingstown — Powers conferred.**

(a) The provisions of § 46-22-14, or any other provisions of the general laws notwithstanding and in addition to any authority and powers conferred upon the town council of the town of South Kingstown, authority shall also be granted to the town council of the town of South Kingstown to authorize for the appointment of a harbormaster and by ordinance grant such authority as the town council may deem necessary to the harbormaster for the enforcement and supervision of any ordinances, rules, and regulations governing the public waters within its jurisdiction, and to regulate by ordinance the speed, management, and control of all vessels and the size, type, location, and use of all anchorages and moorings within the public waters within the confines of the town including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the authority and power to prohibit waterskiing on any of the public waters, to designate upon a map of the

public waters within the town the places where permanent or temporary moorings or anchorages may be maintained, to assign moorings, to remove moorings, to collect a fee for the use of moorings, to provide for minimum mooring specifications, to provide regulations for houseboats that are not ~~self-propelled within the boundaries of a coastal resources management council authorized marina, to provide regulations for residential watercrafts,~~ to provide regulations for regattas, races, marine parades, tournaments, and exhibitions, to provide for the removal of wrecks or derelict or abandoned boats or docks, and to impose penalties for violation of the ordinances, not exceeding in amount ~~one hundred dollars (\$100)~~ five hundred dollars (\$500) ~~or imprisonment not exceeding ten (10) days in some jail or house of correction,~~ for any one offense; and the fines to be recovered to the use of the town.

(b) No powers or duties granted herein shall be construed to abrogate the powers or duties granted to the coastal resources management council as provided in chapter 23 of this title, as amended, or the department of environmental management as provided in chapter 17.1 of title 42 or chapters 12 and 22 of title 46.

#### **46-4-6.4. Town of North Kingstown — Powers conferred.**

(a) The provisions of § 46-22-14, or any other provisions of the general laws notwithstanding, and in addition to any authority and powers conferred upon the town council of the town of North Kingstown authority shall also be granted to the town council of the town of North Kingstown to authorize for the appointment of a harbormaster and by ordinance grant such authority as the town council may deem necessary to the harbormaster for the enforcement and supervision of any ordinances, rules, and regulations governing the public waters within its jurisdiction, to regulate by ordinance the speed, management, and control of all vessels and the size, type, location, and use of all anchorages and moorings within the public waters within the confines of the town including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the authority and power to prohibit waterskiing on any of the public waters, to provide for the regulation of skin diving, and scuba diving, to designate upon a map of the public waters within the town the places where permanent or temporary moorings or anchorages may be maintained, to assign moorings, to remove moorings, to set and collect a fee for the use of moorings, to provide for minimum mooring specifications,

to provide regulations for houseboats that are not ~~self-propelled~~ within the boundaries of a coastal resources management council authorized marina, to provide regulations for residential watercrafts, to provide regulations for regattas, races, marine parades, tournaments, and exhibitions, to provide for the removal of wrecks or derelict or abandoned boats or docks, and to impose penalties for violation of the ordinances, not exceeding in amount ~~one hundred dollars (\$100)~~ five hundred dollars (\$500) ~~or imprisonment not exceeding ten (10) days in some jail or house of correction~~, for any one offense; and the fines to be recovered to the use of the town.

(b) No powers or duties granted herein shall be construed to abrogate the powers or duties granted to the coastal resources management council as provided in chapter 23 of this title, as amended, or the department of environmental management as provided in chapter 17.1 of title 42 or chapters 12 and 22 of title 46.

**46-4-6.5. Town of Tiverton — Powers conferred.**

(a) The provisions of § 46-22-14 or any other provisions of the general laws notwithstanding and in addition to any authority and powers conferred upon the town council of the town of Tiverton, authority shall also be granted to the town council of the town of Tiverton to authorize for the appointment of a harbor commission and by ordinance grant such authority as the town council may deem necessary or desirable to the harbor commission for the enforcement and supervision of any ordinances, rules, and regulations governing the public waters within its jurisdiction, and to regulate by ordinance the speed, management, and control of all vessels and the size, type, location, and use of all anchorages and moorages within the public waters within the confines of the town, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the authority and power to regulate waterskiing upon any of the public waters; to designate upon a map of the public waters within the town the places where permanent or temporary moorings or anchorages may be maintained; to assign moorings; to remove moorings; to collect fees for the use of moorings; to provide for minimum mooring specifications; to provide for inspection of moorings; to provide regulations for houseboats that are not ~~self-propelled~~ within the boundaries of a coastal resources management council authorized marina, to provide regulations for residential watercrafts; to provide regulations for regattas,

races, marine parades, tournaments, and exhibitions; to provide for the removal of wrecks or derelict or abandoned boats or docks; to provide for the regulation of skin diving, and scuba diving; and to impose penalties for violation of the ordinances not exceeding in amount ~~one hundred dollars (\$100)~~ five hundred dollars (\$500) ~~or imprisonment not exceeding ten (10) days in some jail or house of correction~~ for any one offense and the fines to be recovered to the use of the town.

(b) No powers or duties granted herein shall be construed to abrogate the powers or duties granted to the coastal resources management council as provided in chapter 23 of this title, as amended, or the department of environmental management as provided in chapter 17.1 of title 42 or chapters 12 and 22 of title 46.

**46-4-6.6. Town of Newport — Powers conferred.**

(a) The provisions of § 46-22-14, or any other provisions of the general laws notwithstanding, and in addition to any authority and powers conferred upon the city council of the city of Newport, authority shall also be granted to the city council of the city of Newport to authorize for the appointment of a harbor coordinator and by ordinance grant such authority as the city council may deem necessary to the harbor coordinator for the enforcement and supervision of any ordinances, rules, and regulations governing the public waters within its jurisdiction, and to regulate by ordinance the speed, management, and control of all vessels and the size, type, location, and use of all anchorages and moorings, within the public waters within the confines of the city including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the authority and power to prohibit waterskiing on any of the public waters, to designate upon a map of the public waters within the city the places where permanent or temporary moorings or anchorages may be maintained, to assign moorings, to remove moorings, to collect a fee for the use of moorings, to provide for minimum mooring specifications, to provide regulations for houseboats that are not ~~self-propelled~~ within the boundaries of a coastal resources management council authorized marina, to provide regulations for residential watercrafts, to provide regulations for regattas, races, marine parades, tournaments, and exhibitions, to provide for the removal of wrecks or derelicts or abandoned boats or docks, and to impose penalties for violators of the ordinances, not to exceed in amount ~~three hundred dollars (\$300)~~ five hundred



~~dollars (\$500) or imprisonment not exceeding ten (10) days in some jail or house of correction;~~ for any one offense; and the fines to be recovered to the use of the city.

(b) No powers or duties granted herein shall be construed to abrogate the powers or duties granted to the coastal resources management council as provided in chapter 23 of this title, as amended, or the department of environmental management as provided in chapter 17.1 of title 42 or chapters 12 and 22 of title 46.

**46-4-6.7. Town of Little Compton — Powers conferred.**

(a) The provisions of § 46-22-14, or any other provisions of the general laws notwithstanding, and in addition to any authority and powers conferred upon the town council of the town of Little Compton, authority shall also be granted to the town council of the town of Little Compton to enact ordinances as the town council may deem necessary or desirable for the enforcement of any rules and regulations established by the town council governing the public waters within its jurisdiction, and to regulate by ordinance the speed, management, and control of all vessels and objects and the size, type, location, and use of all anchorages and moorages within the public waters within the confines of the town, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the authority and power to regulate waterskiing upon any of the public waters; to designate upon a map of the public waters within the town the places where permanent or temporary moorings or anchorages may be maintained; to assign moorings; to remove moorings; to collect fees for the use of moorings, the fees to be recovered for use by the town of Little Compton; to provide for minimum mooring specifications, to provide for inspection of moorings; to provide regulations for houseboats that are not ~~self-propelled~~ within the boundaries of a coastal resources management council authorized marina, to provide regulations for residential watercrafts; to regulate the location and placement of lobster pots, fish traps, and other fishing gear; to provide regulations for regattas, races, marine parades, tournaments, and exhibitions; to provide for the removal of wrecks and derelicts or abandoned boats or docks; to provide for the regulation of skin diving and scuba diving; to prevent littering and pollution of its public waters; and to impose penalties for violation of the ordinances not exceeding in amount ~~one hundred~~

~~dollars (\$100)~~ five hundred dollars (\$500) ~~or imprisonment not exceeding ten (10) days in some jail or house of correction~~ for any one offense and the fines to be recovered to the use of the town.

(b) No powers or duties granted herein shall be construed to abrogate the powers or duties granted to the coastal resources management council as provided in chapter 23 of this title, as amended, or the department of environmental management as provided in chapter 17.1 of title 42 or chapters 12 and 22 of title 46.

**46-4-6.8. Town of Narragansett — Powers conferred.**

(a) The provisions of § 46-22-14 or any other provisions of the general laws notwithstanding and in addition to any authority and powers conferred upon the town council of the town of Narragansett, authority shall also be granted to the town council of the town of Narragansett to authorize the appointment of a harbormaster, assistant harbormasters, and a Harbor Management Committee and to enact such ordinances as the town council may deem necessary or desirable for the enforcement and supervision of any ordinances, rules, and regulations governing the public waters within its jurisdiction, to regulate by ordinance the speed, management, and control of all vessels and the size, type, location, and use of all anchorages and moorings within the public waters within the confines of the town including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the authority and power to prohibit waterskiing of any of the public waters, to provide for the regulation of skin diving, and scuba diving, to designate upon a map of the public waters within the town the places where permanent or temporary moorings or anchorages may be maintained, to assign moorings, to remove moorings, to set and collect a fee for the use of moorings, to provide for minimum mooring specifications, to provide regulations for houseboats that are not ~~self-propelled~~ within the boundaries of a coastal resources management council authorized marina, to provide regulations for residential watercrafts, to provide regulations for regattas, races, marine parades, tournaments, and exhibitions, to provide for the removal of wrecks or derelicts or abandoned boats or docks, and to impose penalties for violation of the ordinances, not exceeding in amount ~~one hundred dollars (\$100)~~ five hundred dollars (\$500) ~~or imprisonment not exceeding ten (10) days~~ for any one offense; and the fines to be recovered to the use of the town. The town council shall also have the authority to recover the cost of

removing any wreck or derelicts or abandoned boats or docks from the owner or persons responsible for the wrecks, derelicts, abandoned boats, or docks by suit in either the district court or the superior court of Washington County.

(b) No powers or duties granted herein shall be construed to abrogate the powers or duties granted to the coastal resources management council as provided in chapter 23 of this title, as amended, or the department of environmental management as provided in chapter 17.1 of title 42 or chapters 12 and 22 of title 46.

**46-4-6.9. Town of Jamestown — Powers conferred.**

(a) The provisions of § 46-22-14, or any other provisions notwithstanding, and in addition to any authority and powers conferred upon the town council of the town of Jamestown, authority shall also be granted to the town council of the town of Jamestown to enact ordinances as the town council may deem necessary or desirable for the enforcement and supervision of any rules and regulations established by the town council governing the public waters within its jurisdiction, and to regulate by ordinance the speed, management, and control of all vessels and the size, type, location, and use of all anchorages and moorages within the public waters within the confines of the town, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the authority and power to regulate waterskiing upon any of the public waters; to designate upon a map of the public waters within the town the places where permanent or temporary moorings or anchorages may be maintained; to assign moorings; to remove moorings; to collect fees for the use of moorings; to provide for minimum mooring specifications; to provide for inspection of moorings; to provide regulations for houseboats that are not ~~self-propelled~~ within the boundaries of a coastal resources management council authorized marina, to provide regulations for residential watercrafts; to provide regulations for regattas, races, marine parades, tournaments, and exhibitions; to provide for the removal of wrecks or derelict or abandoned boats or docks; to provide for the regulation of skin diving and scuba diving; and to impose penalties for violation of the ordinances not exceeding in amount ~~one hundred dollars (\$100)~~ five hundred dollars (\$500) ~~or imprisonment not exceeding ten (10) days in some jail or house of correction~~ for any one offense and the fines to be recovered to the use of the town.

(b) No powers or duties granted herein shall be construed to abrogate the powers or duties granted to the coastal resources management council as provided in chapter 23 of this title, as amended, or the department of environmental management as provided in chapter 17.1 of title 42 or chapters 12 and 22 of title 46.

**46-4-6.10. Town of New Shoreham — Powers conferred.**

(a) The provisions of § 46-22-14, or any other provisions of the general laws notwithstanding, and in addition to any authority or powers conferred upon the town council of the town of New Shoreham authority shall also be granted to the town council of the town of New Shoreham to authorize it for the appointment of a harbormaster and by ordinance grant such authority as the town council may deem necessary to the harbormaster for the enforcement and supervision of any ordinances, rules, and regulations governing the public waters within its jurisdiction, and to regulate by ordinance the speed, management, and control of all vessels, and the size, type, location, and use of all anchorages and moorings within the public waters within the confines of the town, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the authority and power to prohibit waterskiing on any public waters, to designate upon a map of the public waters within the town, the places where permanent or temporary moorings or anchorages may be maintained, to assign moorings, to remove moorings, to collect a fee for the use of moorings, to provide regulations for houseboats that are not ~~self-propelled~~ within the boundaries of a coastal resources management council authorized marina, to provide regulations for residential watercrafts, to provide regulations for regattas, races, marine parades, tournaments, and exhibitions, to provide for the removal of wrecks or derelicts or abandoned boats or docks, and to impose penalties for violators of the ordinances, not to exceed in amount ~~one hundred dollars (\$100)~~ five hundred dollars (\$500) ~~or imprisonment not exceeding ten (10) days in some jail or house of correction,~~ for any one offense; and the fines to be recovered to the use of the town. The town council shall also have the authority to recover the cost of removing any wreck or derelicts or abandoned boats or docks from the owner or persons responsible for the wrecks, derelicts, abandoned boats, or docks by suit in either the district court or the superior court of Washington County.

(b) No powers or duties granted herein shall be construed to abrogate the powers or duties granted to the coastal resources management council as provided in chapter 23 of this title, as amended, or the department of environmental management as provided in chapter 17.1 of title 42 or chapters 12 and 22 of title 46.

**46-4-6.11. Town of Charlestown — Powers conferred.**

(a) In addition to any authority or powers conferred upon the town council of the town of Charlestown, authority shall also be granted to the town council of the town of Charlestown to authorize it for the appointment of a harbormaster and by ordinance grant such authority as the town council may deem necessary to the harbormaster for the enforcement and supervision of any ordinances, rules, and regulations governing the public waters within its jurisdiction, and to regulate by ordinance the speed, management, and control of all vessels, and the size, type, location, and use of all anchorages and moorings within the public waters within the confines of the town, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the authority and power to prohibit waterskiing on any said public waters, to designate upon a map of the public waters within the town, the places where permanent or temporary moorings or anchorages may be maintained, to assign moorings, to remove moorings, to collect a fee for the use of moorings, to provide regulations for houseboats that are not ~~self-propelled~~ within the boundaries of a coastal resources management council authorized marina, to provide regulations for residential watercrafts, to provide regulations for regattas, races, marine parades, tournaments, and exhibitions, to provide for the removal of wrecks or derelicts or abandoned boats, and to impose penalties for violators of the ordinances, not to exceed in amount ~~one hundred dollars (\$100)~~ five hundred dollars (\$500) ~~or imprisonment not exceeding ten (10) days in some jail or house of correction~~, for any one offense, and the fines to be recovered to the use of the town. The town council shall also have the authority to recover the cost of removing any wreck or derelicts or abandoned boats from the owner or persons responsible for the wrecks, derelicts, or abandoned boats by suit in either the district court or the superior court of Washington County.

(b) No powers or duties granted herein shall be construed to abrogate the powers or duties granted to the coastal resources management council as provided in chapter 23 of this title, as amended, or the

[department of environmental management as provided in chapter 17.1 of title 42 or chapters 12 and 22 of title 46.](#)

**46-4-6.12. Town of Middletown — Powers conferred.**

(a) The provisions of § 46-22-14, or any other provisions of the general laws notwithstanding, and in addition to any authority and powers conferred upon the town council of the town of Middletown, authority shall also be granted to the town council of the town of Middletown to authorize for the appointment of a harbormaster and by ordinance grant such authority as the town council may deem necessary to the harbormaster for the enforcement and supervision of any ordinances, rules, and regulations governing the public waters within its jurisdiction, to regulate by ordinance the speed, management, and control of all vessels, both wind and power, and the number, size, type, location, and use of all anchorages and moorings within the public waters within the confines of the town including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the authority and power to prohibit waterskiing on any of the public waters, to provide for the regulation of skin diving and scuba diving, to designate upon a map of the public waters within the towns the places where permanent or temporary moorings or anchorages may be maintained, to assign moorings, to remove moorings, to set and collect a fee for the use of moorings, to provide for minimum mooring specifications, to provide regulations for houseboats that are not ~~self-propelled~~ [within the boundaries of a coastal resources management council authorized marina, to provide regulations for residential watercrafts](#), to provide regulations for regattas, races, marine parades, tournaments, and exhibitions, to provide for the removal of wrecks or derelict or abandoned boats or docks, and to impose penalties for violation of the ordinances, not exceeding in amount ~~one hundred dollars (\$100)~~ [five hundred dollars \(\\$500\)](#) ~~or imprisonment not exceeding ten (10) days in some jail or house of correction~~, for any one offense; [and](#) the fines to be recovered to the use of said town.

(b) No powers or duties granted herein shall be construed to abrogate the powers or duties granted to the coastal resources management council as provided in chapter 23 of this title, [as amended, or the department of environmental management as provided in chapter 17.1 of title 42 or chapters 12 and 22 of title 46.](#)

**46-4-6.13. Town of Portsmouth — Powers conferred.**

(a) The provisions of § 46-22-14 or any other provisions of the general laws notwithstanding, and in addition to any authority and powers conferred upon the town council of the town of Portsmouth authority shall also be granted to the town council of the town of Portsmouth to authorize for the appointment of a harbormaster and by ordinance grant such authority as the town council may deem necessary to the harbormaster for the enforcement and supervision of any ordinances, rules, and regulations governing the public waters within its jurisdiction, to regulate by ordinance the speed, management, and control of all vessels, both wind and power, and the number, size, type, location, and use of all anchorages and moorings within the public waters within the confines of the town, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the authority and power to prohibit waterskiing on any of the public waters, to provide for the regulation of skin diving and scuba diving, to designate upon a map of the public waters within the town the places where permanent or temporary moorings or anchorages may be maintained, to assign moorings, to remove moorings, to set and collect a fee for the use of moorings, to provide for minimum mooring specifications, to provide regulations for houseboats that are not ~~self propelled~~ within the boundaries of a coastal resources management council authorized marina, to provide regulations for residential watercrafts, to provide regulations for regattas, races, marine parades, tournaments, and exhibitions, to provide for the removal of wrecks or derelict or abandoned boats or docks, and to impose penalties for violation of the ordinances, not exceeding in amount ~~one hundred dollars (\$100)~~ five hundred dollars (\$500) ~~or imprisonment not exceeding ten (10) days in some jail or house of correction,~~ for any one offense; and the fines to be recovered to the use of the town.

(b) No powers or duties granted herein shall be construed to abrogate the powers or duties granted to the coastal resources management council as provided in chapter 23 of this title, as amended, or the department of environmental management as provided in chapter 17.1 of title 42 or chapters 12 and 22 of title 46; and, further, the provisions of this section shall not affect the location or assignment of any moorings existing on June 27, 1986, except that those deemed by the harbormaster to be located at an unacceptable site shall be moved should he or she so order.

**46-4-6.14. Town of East Greenwich — Powers conferred.**

(a) The provisions of § 46-22-14, or any other provisions of the general laws notwithstanding, and in addition to any authority and powers conferred upon the town council of the town of East Greenwich, authority shall also be granted to the town council of the town of East Greenwich to authorize for the appointment of a harbormaster and by ordinance grant such authority as the town council may deem necessary to the harbormaster for the enforcement and supervision of any ordinances, rules, and regulations governing the public waters within its jurisdiction, to regulate by ordinance the speed, management, and control of all vessels, both wind and power, and the number, size, type, location, and use of all anchorages and moorings within the public waters within the confines of the town including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the authority and power to prohibit waterskiing on any of the public waters, to provide for the regulation of scindiving and scubadiving, to designate upon a map of the public waters within the town the places where permanent or temporary moorings or anchorages may be maintained, to assign moorings, to remove moorings, to set and collect a fee for the use of moorings, to provide for minimum mooring specifications, to provide regulations for houseboats that are not ~~self-propelled~~ within the boundaries of a coastal resources management council authorized marina, to provide regulations for residential watercrafts, to provide regulations for regattas, races, marine parades, tournaments, and exhibitions, to provide for the removal of wrecks or derelict or abandoned boats or docks, and to impose penalties for violation of the ordinances, not exceeding in amount ~~one hundred dollars (\$100)~~ five hundred dollars (\$500) ~~or imprisonment not exceeding ten (10) days in some jail or house of correction~~, for any one offense; and the fines to be recovered to the use of the town.

(b) No powers or duties granted herein shall be construed to abrogate the powers or duties granted to the coastal resources management council as provided in chapter 23 of this title, as amended, or the department of environmental management as provided in chapter 17.1 of title 42 or chapters 12 and 22 of title 46.

**46-4-6.15. Town of Cranston — Powers conferred.**



(a) The provisions of § 46-22-14, or any other provisions of the general laws notwithstanding, and in addition to any authority and powers conferred upon the city council of the city of Cranston, authority shall also be granted to the city council of the city of Cranston to authorize for the appointment of a harbormaster and by ordinance grant such authority as the said city council may deem necessary to the harbormaster for the enforcement and supervision of any ordinances, rules and regulations governing the public waters within its jurisdiction, to regulate by ordinance the speed, management and control of all vessels, both wind and power, and the number, size, type, location and use of all anchorages and moorings within the public waters within the confines of the city including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the authority and power to prohibit waterskiing on any of the public waters, to provide for the regulation of skin diving and scuba diving, to designate upon a map of the public waters within the city the places where permanent or temporary moorings or anchorages may be maintained, to assign moorings, to remove moorings, to set and collect a fee for the use of moorings, to provide for minimum mooring specifications, to provide regulations for houseboats that are not ~~self propelled~~ within the boundaries of a coastal resources management council authorized marina, to provide regulations for residential watercrafts, to provide regulations for regattas, races, marine parades, tournaments, and exhibitions, to provide for the removal of wrecks or derelict or abandoned boats or docks, and to impose penalties for violation of the ordinances, not exceeding in an amount of ~~one hundred dollars (\$100)~~ five hundred dollars (\$500) ~~or imprisonment not exceeding ten (10) days in some jail or house of correction,~~ for any one offense; and the fines to be recovered to the use of the city.

(b) No powers or duties granted herein shall be construed to abrogate the powers or duties granted to the coastal resources management council as provided in chapter 23 of this title, as amended, or the department of environmental management as provided in chapter 17.1 of title 42 or chapters 12 and 22 of title 46.

**46-4-6.16. Town of Warren — Powers conferred.**

(a) The provision of § 46-22-14 or any other provisions of the general laws notwithstanding and in addition to any authority and powers conferred upon the town council of the town of Warren, authority

shall also be granted to the town council of the town of Warren to authorize for the appointment of a harbormaster and by ordinance grant such authority as the town council may deem necessary to the harbormaster for the enforcement and supervision of any ordinances, rules, and regulations governing the public waters within its jurisdiction, to regulate by ordinance the speed, management, and control of all vessels, both wind and power, and the number, size, type, location, and use of all anchorages and moorings within the public waters within the confines of the town including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the authority and power to prohibit waterskiing on any of the public waters, to provide for the regulation of skin diving and scuba diving, to designate upon a map of the public waters within the town the places where permanent or temporary moorings or anchorages may be maintained, to assign moorings, to remove moorings, to set and collect a fee for the use of moorings, to provide for minimum mooring specifications, to provide regulations for houseboats that are not ~~self-propelled~~ within the boundaries of a coastal resources management council authorized marina, to provide regulations for residential watercrafts, to provide regulations for regattas, races, marine parades, tournaments, and exhibitions, to provide for the removal of wrecks or derelict or abandoned boats or docks, and to impose penalties for violation of the ordinances, not exceeding in amount ~~one hundred dollars (\$100)~~ five hundred dollars (\$500) ~~or imprisonment not exceeding ten (10) days in some jail or house of correction,~~ for any one offense, and the fines to be recovered to the use of said town.

(b) No powers or duties granted herein shall be construed to abrogate the powers or duties granted to the coastal resources management council as provided in chapter 23 of this title, as amended, or the department of environmental management as provided in chapter 17.1 of title 42 or chapters 12 and 22 of title 46.

**46-4-6.17. Town of Westerly — Powers conferred.**

(a) The provisions of § 46-22-14, or any other provisions of the general laws notwithstanding, and in addition to any authority and powers conferred upon the town council of the town of Westerly, authority shall also be granted to the town council of the town of Westerly to authorize for the appointment of a harbormaster and by ordinance grant such authority as the town council may deem necessary to the

harbormaster for the enforcement and supervision of any ordinances, rules, and regulations governing the public waters within its jurisdiction, to regulate by ordinance the speed, management, and control of all vessels, both wind and power, and the number, size, type, location, and use of all anchorages and moorings within the public waters within the confines of the town including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the authority and power to prohibit water-skiing on any of the public waters, to provide for the regulation of skin diving and scuba diving, to designate upon a map of the public waters within the towns the places where permanent or temporary moorings or anchorages may be maintained, to assign moorings, to remove moorings, to set and collect a fee for the use of moorings, to provide for minimum mooring specifications, to provide regulations for houseboats that are not ~~self-propelled~~ within the boundaries of a coastal resources management council authorized marina, to provide regulations for residential watercrafts, to provide regulations for regattas, races, marine parades, tournaments, and exhibitions, to provide for the removal of wrecks or derelict or abandoned boats or docks, and to impose penalties for violation of the ordinances, not exceeding in amount ~~one hundred dollars (\$100)~~ five hundred dollars (\$500) ~~or imprisonment not exceeding ten (10) days in some jail or house of correction,~~ for any one offense; and the fines to be recovered to the use of said town.

(b) No powers or duties granted herein shall be construed to abrogate the powers or duties granted to the coastal resources management council as provided in chapter 23 of this title, as amended, or the department of environmental management as provided in chapter 17.1 of title 42 or chapters 12 and 22 of title 46.

SECTION 3. Chapter 46-4 of the General Laws in Title 46 entitled "Waters and Navigation" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following new section:

**46-4-9. Definitions.**

As used in this chapter, unless the context clearly requires a different meaning:

(1) "Houseboat" means a motorized vessel that is usually non-planing and designed primarily for multi-purpose accommodation spaces with low freeboard and little or no foredeck or cockpit.

(2) "Residential watercraft" means as defined in § 44-5-25.1.

SECTION 3. Sections 46-22-2, 46-22-6, and 46-22-9.1 of the General Laws in Chapter 46-22 entitled "Regulation of Boats" are hereby amended to read as follows:

**46-22-2. Definitions.**

As used in this chapter, unless the context clearly requires a different meaning:

(1) A "Coastal pond" shall be as designated or defined in the rules and regulations of the coastal resources management council.

(2) "Director" means the director of the department of environmental management.

(3) "Houseboat" means a motorized vessel that is usually non-planing and designed primarily for multi-purpose accommodation spaces with low freeboard and little or no foredeck or cockpit.

~~(4)~~(4) "Motorboat" means any vessel whether or not the vessel is propelled by machinery. For purposes of this chapter, motorboat shall not include ~~houseboats as defined in § 44-5-25.1~~ residential watercrafts, canoes, and rowboats twelve feet (12') in length or less.

~~(5)~~(5) "Operate" means to navigate or otherwise use a motorboat or a vessel.

~~(6)~~(6) "Owner" means a person, other than a lien holder, having the property in or title to a motorboat. The term includes a person entitled to the use or possession of a motorboat subject to an interest in another person, reserved, or created by agreement and securing payment or performance of an obligation, but the term excludes a lessee under a lease not intended as security.

~~(7)~~(7) "Person" means an individual, partnership, firm, corporation, association, or other entity.

~~(8)~~(8) "Personal watercraft" means a small class A vessel less than sixteen feet (16') in length which uses an outboard motor or an inboard motor powering a water jet pump as its primary source of motive power; and which is designed to be operated by a person sitting, standing, or kneeling on, or being towed behind the vessel, rather than the conventional manner of sitting or standing inside of the vessel.

(9) "Residential watercraft" means as defined in § 44-5-25.1.

~~(10)~~(10) "Vessel" means every description of watercraft, other than a seaplane on the water, used or capable of being used as a means of transportation on water.

~~(8)~~(11) “Waters of this state” means any waters within the territorial limits of this state, and the marginal sea adjacent to this state and the high seas when navigated as a part of a journey or ride to or from the shore of this state.

**46-22-6. Exemption from numbering provisions of this chapter.**

A motorboat shall not be required to be numbered under this chapter if it is:

(1) Already covered by a number in full force and effect which has been awarded to it pursuant to federal law or federally approved numbering system of another state; provided, however, in the event the boat is to be operated on the waters of this state in excess of ninety (90) days, the owner shall record the number with the department of environmental management, division of boating safety, and pay the fees required under this chapter.

(2) A motorboat from a country other than the United States temporarily using the waters of this state.

(3) A motorboat whose owner is the United States, a state, or a subdivision thereof.

(4) A ship's lifeboat.

(5) A motorboat used exclusively for racing.

(6) A ~~houseboat~~ residential watercraft as defined in § 44-5-25.1.

(7) A rowboat twelve feet (12') in length or less.

(8) A canoe.

(9) A ferry.

**46-22-9.1. Houseboats and residential watercrafts; prohibitions; regulations—~~Exclusion from coastal ponds.~~**

(a) No person shall live on a houseboat or residential watercraft on any coastal pond in this state.

(b) Notwithstanding any general, public or special law to the contrary, and in addition to any authority or powers conferred upon the town or city councils of the state, the authority to regulate by ordinance the short term rental of residential watercrafts or houseboats offered for tourist or transient occupancy through a hosting platform, as such terms are defined in this chapter and § 42-63.1-2, shall be

conferred to the town or city councils of the state. ~~As used in this section, “houseboat,” means a building constructed on a float, raft, or barge that is used for single or multiple family habitation or is represented as a place of business. If used as a means of transportation, this use is secondary. “Houseboat” includes platforms, and waterborne hotels and restaurants.~~

(c) Residential watercrafts moored in this state shall tie into marina holding tank pump out facilities. ~~A “coastal pond”, as used in this section, shall be as designated or defined in the rules and regulations of the coastal resources management council.~~

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect on January 1, 2026.

EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO TAXATION – LEVY AND ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL TAXES

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This act would provide for the municipal regulation of houseboats and residential watercrafts.

This act would take effect on January 1, 2026.