

Committee on Environmental Preservation and Conservation

HB 7025 — At-risk Vessels

by Highway and Waterway Safety Subcommittee; and Rep. Raschein, and others (SB 1300 by Senator Dean)

The bill prohibits vessels that are in danger of becoming derelict from anchoring on, mooring on, or occupying the waters of Florida.

The bill provides that an officer may determine that a vessel is at risk of becoming derelict when any of the following conditions exist:

- The vessel is taking on, or has taken on, water without an effective means to dewater;
- Spaces on the vessel which are designed to be enclosed are incapable of being sealed off or remain open to the elements for extended periods of time;
- The vessel has broken loose or is in danger of breaking loose from its anchor;
- The vessel is left or stored aground unattended in such a state that would prevent the vessel from getting underway, is listing due to water intrusion, or is sunken or partially sunken.

The bill provides that a person who anchors or moors a vessel at risk of becoming derelict or allows such a vessel to occupy such waters commits a noncriminal infraction. This penalty is in addition to other penalties provided by law. The provisions of the bill do not apply to a vessel that is moored to a private dock or wet slip with the consent of the owner for the purpose of receiving repairs.

The bill provides the following penalties:

- First offense: \$50;
- Second offense within 30 days or more after a first offense: \$100; and
- Third or subsequent offense occurring 30 days or more after a previous offense: \$250.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2016.

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 116-1