

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
80R3122 ABC-D

S.B. 626
By: Harris
Natural Resources
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Currently, Texas law requires boater education for boat operators under 18 years of age. The average age for those involved in the 308 boating accidents in 2004 was 37 years of age. Additionally, there are no education requirements for people who operate vessels carrying passengers for hire. The boat operator can transport paying customers without having obtained any education in boater safety.

As proposed, S.B. 626 helps to ensure greater safety on Texas lakes by requiring everyone operating a vessel to have undergone a boater education course.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 31.107, Parks and Wildlife Code, to prohibit a person from operating a motorboat of over 10, rather than 15, horsepower, on the public waters of this state unless the person has successfully completed a boater education course as required by Section 31.109 and satisfied certain conditions.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 31.109(a), Parks and Wildlife Code, to include a person who operates a vessel carrying passengers for hire among those persons to whom the boater education course applies. Deletes text providing that the requirement applies to a person born on or after September 1, 1984.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 31.110, Parks and Wildlife Code, by deleting existing text exempting certain persons from compliance with Section 31.109 (Boater Education Course Required for Certain Persons).

SECTION 4. Amends Subchapter D, Chapter 31, Parks and Wildlife Code, by adding Section 31.112, as follows:

Sec. 31.112. FEES. (a) Requires any fees collected by the Parks and Wildlife Department under Section 31.108 (Boater Education Program) to be deposited in the game, fish, and water safety account established under Section 11.032 (Game, Fish, and Water Safety Account; Sources).

(b) Provides that interest that accrues on the account established under Subsection (a) remains in that account.

SECTION 5. Effective date: September 1, 2007.