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**Innovation, Community & Economic  
Development, & Veterans Committee**

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**HB 1781**

**Brief Description:** Modifying boater safety and education requirements.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Donaghy, Ryu and Ormsby.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Directs the Parks and Recreation Commission to implement a boater safety education program for a boater operating a human-powered vessel by January 1, 2024.
- Requires an operator of a human-powered vessel to obtain a \$10 paddle education card.
- Expires a boater education card and a paddle education card 20 years after the date of issuance.

**Hearing Date:** 2/14/23

**Staff:** Emily Poole (786-7106).

**Background:**

The Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) is required to establish and implement a program to provide required boating safety education. The Commission must establish a minimum standard of boater safety accomplishment and adopt minimum standards for boating safety education. To obtain a boater education card, a boater must provide a certificate of accomplishment issued by a boater educator for taking and passing an accredited boating safety education course or equivalency exam, or provide proof of completion of a course that meets the standard adopted by the Commission. The Commission is required to charge a fee of \$10 for a

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boater education card.

To operate a motor-driven boat or vessel of 15 horsepower or greater, a person must be at least 12 years old and possess a boater education card or be under the supervision of a person at least 16 years old who has a boater education card. Certain individuals are not required to have a boater education card, including a person at least 12 years old renting a vessel who completes a Commission-approved safety operating and equipment checklist, and any person born before January 1, 1955.

Failure to possess a boater education card as required by law is an infraction punishable by a fine.

### **Summary of Bill:**

By January 1, 2024, the Commission is required to implement a program to provide required boating safety education for a boater operating a human-powered vessel.

"Human-powered vessel" is defined to mean a vessel powered only by its occupant or occupants including, but not limited to, a vessel powered only by the occupant's hands or feet, oars, or paddles. "Human-powered vessel" includes, but is not limited to, canoes, kayaks, and stand-up paddleboards, but does not include surfboards.

A person may not operate a human-powered vessel unless the person is at least 12 years of age and:

- has a boater education card or a paddle education card for human-powered vessels; or
- is under the direct supervision of a person 16 years of age or older who is in possession of a boater education card or a paddle education card.

To obtain a paddle education card, a person must provide a certificate issued by a boating educator for taking and passing a human-powered vessel safety education course or equivalency exam, or provide proof of completion of a course that meets the standard adopted by the Commission.

A boater possessing a valid boater education card is not required to obtain a paddle education card to operate a human-powered vessel. A person operating a human-powered vessel is not required to obtain a paddle education card if they are renting a human-powered vessel for short-term use and complete a Commission-approved abbreviated program or checklist.

The Commission is required to establish a fee of \$10 for the paddle education card to fund all Commission activities related to the human-powered vessel safety education program. The Commission must also develop an electronic version of the card that can be stored digitally. Paddle education cards and boater education cards expire after 20 years but may be renewed.

Failure to possess a boater education card or a paddle education card is an infraction punishable

by a fine.

The exemptions to the boater education card requirement for a person operating a motor driven boat or vessel with a mechanical power of 15 horsepower or less, or a person born before January 1, 1955, are eliminated. Provisions relating to the phasing in of the boater safety education program are eliminated.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.