

GOVERNOR RON DESANTIS SIGNS FLORIDA'S BOATER FREEDOM ACT

May 19, 2025

PANAMA CITY BEACH, Fla.—Today, Governor Ron DeSantis signed Senate Bill 1388, also known as the Boater Freedom Act, into law. This bill allows Florida boaters to be free from undue government interference in their enjoyment of Florida's waters by preventing local bans on gas vessels, preventing random vessel safety inspections without probable cause, and directing the FWC to create a five-year safety inspection decal program linked to vessel registration.

"Florida is the boating and fishing capital of the world—and the Boater Freedom Act will ensure that this remains the case," **said Governor Ron DeSantis.**

This legislation ensures that boaters who prefer gas vehicles will not be limited by activist local entities. It also maintains statewide protections of wake speeds, manatee zones, and seagrass areas.

The bill will also prohibit boat inspections without probable cause, which were previously conducted as 'safety compliance' checks. The bill will additionally direct FWC to work with tax collectors to proactively provide a "Florida Freedom Boater" decal at registration. This decal will indicate to law enforcement that the boater has taken the necessary steps to maintain proper safety requirements. This strikes an appropriate balance between ensuring compliance with boating laws and reducing unnecessary disruptions for law-abiding boaters, making enforcement more practical and effective.

This bill is the culmination of the Governor's boater freedom initiative proposal [announced in February](#) of this year.

Governor DeSantis also signed House Bill 735, which provides additional funding for public boat ramps, parking, and marina programs through the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission. These funds will ensure greater access to public waters and enable Florida to remain the boating- and fishing-capital of the world.