

WEEK 1 REPORT

// 2021 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

+ MARINE INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION OF FLORIDA

MARCH 1-5, 2020



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The 2021 Legislative Session officially kicked off March 2nd in Tallahassee. The effects of COVID have impacted how business is done daily at the Capitol. The usual crammed committee hearings with lobbyists and legislators have been replaced by empty hallways and video conferencing. Everyone is having to make adjustments and try and get their messages across regarding support/opposition to proposed legislation. This has created many challenges that we are all trying to work through to the best of our abilities. So far, Zoom meetings, phone calls, texts, emails, and video testimony have taken the place of in-person meetings. Only one week into the nine-week Session, and everyone seems to be trying to make the best of an awkward situation.

I have attached, for your convenience, the Florida Senate and Florida House of Representative COVID Legislative Session protocols. As you will see, they have two totally different sets of rules. However, I am happy to report that elected officials seem to be going out of their way to still be accessible to our issues.

As you will see below, there are numerous boating bills this year. MIAF has been trying for months to negotiate with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission on their proposed boating bill. FWC has yet to accept any of our suggested amendments. We are now actively working with other boating interests and meeting with sponsors to discuss our concerns with the bill in its current form. We will keep you posted as this moves through the process and we hope to report some amendments in the near future. We have serious concerns with the drafting of the boating safety course language and no discharge zone language. We have asked for a 30 day grace period to take the boating safety course as not to impede boat sales and to protect dealer from liability. We are also asking for some language that would recognize boats that have recognizing some boats have sewage treatment systems.

Other bills we have concerns with include any and all bills that ban anchoring in a location without providing a mooring field. There are currently two no anchoring bills filed and MIAF does not want a patchwork approach

around the state banning anchoring on Florid waters. Mooring fields are better for the environment and provide adequate upland facilities for boaters.

Finally there are many other bills related to boating. We have listed below for your review. The “marina evacuation” bill is a negotiated bill from last Session that dies at the last minute. That bill seems to be moving quickly through the process this year.

This year is going to be different and we are going to need to your help. Budget cuts are coming and that will take up a lot of time once the budget process starts. MIAF always support derelict vessel funding, boating infrastructure funding, boating safety funding, etc. We will keep you posted on these issues as they begin to develop their respective budgets.

This is just a sample of the first week. Please stay tuned as we get deeper in the Session.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Margaret Timmins', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Margaret “Missy” Timmins
President
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