

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Senator Roger Holland

Session Contact

State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 465-6739
Senator.Roger.Holland@akleg.gov



Interim Contact

1500 W. Benson Blvd.
Anchorage, AK 99503
(907) 269-0181
alaskasenate.org

January 17, 2022

Senate Bill 148 ***Boating Safety Education***

SPONSOR STATEMENT

According to the U.S. Coast Guard Office of Auxiliary and Boating Safety data, Alaska holds the unfortunate title of having some of the highest recreational boating fatality rates in the United States. At 7.7 times the national average, Alaska suffers 50 fatalities per 100,000 registered boats. On a per capita basis, Alaska's fatality rate of 33 deaths per million people is over 14 times the national average. SB 148 aims to reduce those figures through boating safety education.

The Boating Safety data for 2020 shows that 60% of all boating accidents were a result of improper operation, 90% of accidents involve a boat of greater than 10 hp, and 77% of deaths in which the operator's training was known involved an operator with no boating safety education.

Alaska's Department of Natural Resources currently offers a boating safety education program funded through boating registration receipts. However, unlike many of the lower 48 states, Alaska's program is completely voluntary. SB 148 would begin a slow transition toward requiring boating safety education as a requirement for operating a boat. The bill exempts those with a commercial fishing license and Coast Guard Merchant Mariner credentials. To prevent overwhelming the Boating Safety Education program with tens of thousands of participants all at once, the bill proposes that all Alaskans under the age of 18 on the effective date must take the course before operating a boat of at least 10 hp.

I've drafted this legislation with the goal of creating the smallest burden on our residents and minimal cost to our government. I believe that this bill would save lives, as better training reduces the number of boating accidents we experience. Please join me in supporting this important effort.