

ASSEMBLY TOURISM, GAMING AND THE ARTS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint] **SENATE, No. 601**

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 15, 2026

The Assembly Tourism, Gaming and the Arts Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 601 (1R).

As amended by the committee, this bill requires information to be provided regarding the levels of United States Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices, commonly known as life jackets, under certain circumstances.

Under current law, owners of vessels, including personal watercraft such as jet skis, are required to register their vessels through an application provided by the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission. The bill requires that the registration application include information regarding the levels of United States Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices, including when each level is required pursuant to applicable State and federal laws, rules, and regulations, and when the use of a particular level is recommended.

Additionally, the bill requires that the applicant acknowledge that he or she has read the information by signing, initialing, or checking a box on the application, or by providing written or electronic confirmation of receipt of the information. The Chief Administrator of the Motor Vehicle Commission is required to consult with the Superintendent of State Police and the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, or its successor organization, regarding the information to be included on the application.

Further, under current law, all operators of power vessels and personal watercraft on New Jersey waters are required to complete a boating safety course approved by the Superintendent of State Police. The bill requires approved boating safety courses to include comprehensive instruction on the levels of United States Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices, including when each level is required pursuant to applicable State and federal laws, rules, and regulations, and when the use of a particular level is recommended.

In addition, under the bill, any person engaged in the business of selling or renting personal watercraft for use on the waters of this State is required to provide each purchaser or renter, at the point of sale or

rental, with informational materials prepared by the Superintendent of State Police regarding the levels of United States Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices, including when each level is required pursuant to applicable State and federal laws, rules, and regulations, and when the use of a particular level is recommended.

The bill provides that any person who purchases or rents a personal watercraft is required, at the time of the transaction, to acknowledge that he or she has read the information by signing, initialing, or checking a box on the purchase or rental agreement, or by providing written or electronic confirmation of receipt of the information.

Finally, under the provisions of the bill, as amended, any person engaged in the business of selling or renting a personal watercraft is required to make available to each purchaser or renter the option to purchase or rent a United States Coast Guard approved Level 150 personal flotation device, regardless of whether other levels of personal flotation devices are also available or offered as part of the sale or rental.

The United States Coast Guard classifies personal flotation devices, commonly known as life jackets, into four performance levels – 50, 70, 100, and 150 – each offering varying levels of buoyancy. Level 150 life jackets are offshore devices with high buoyancy and reliable turning even in rough seas, and they provide the highest level of buoyancy and are specifically designed to turn an unconscious person face-up and keep them in a safe, upright position in the water. The purpose of the bill is to ensure that all individuals operating a personal watercraft are properly informed about the differences between life jacket types and the critical role these distinctions play in protecting those engaged in water activities.

As amended and reported by the committee, Senate Bill No. 601 (1R) is identical to Assembly Bill No. 4658, which was also amended and reported by the committee on this date.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to update how the United States Coast Guard classifies personal flotation devices, commonly known as life jackets, into four performance levels – 50, 70, 100, and 150. Formerly, these were referred to as types.