

By: Senator(s) Hudson

To: Wildlife, Fisheries and
Parks

SENATE BILL NO. 2193

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 59-21-81, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
2 TO REQUIRE PERSONS ABOARD VESSELS UNDERWAY TO WEAR A PERSONAL
3 FLOTATION DEVICE; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

5 **SECTION 1.** Section 59-21-81, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
6 amended as follows:

7 59-21-81. (1) (a) Every vessel shall have on board a Coast
8 Guard approved personal flotation device for each person aboard
9 such vessel, and every person * * * on board a motorboat,
10 sailboat, or vessel which measures less than twenty-six (26) feet
11 in length shall wear a * * * Coast Guard approved personal
12 flotation device while such motorboat, sailboat, or vessel is
13 underway.

14 (b) The requirement that a person must wear a personal
15 flotation device does not apply to a vessel only powered by an
16 electric trolling motor or by hand.

17 For the purpose of this subsection, "underway" shall mean at
18 all times except when a motorboat, sailboat, or vessel is
19 anchored, moored, or aground. Every vessel shall have lights
20 during the hours of darkness, which comply with all federal
21 regulations applicable to vessels of its classification. Such
22 vessel shall not be operated unless in a safe and seaworthy
23 condition; the owner and operator shall employ such safety devices
24 as may be necessary for the safe operation of such vessel,
25 including an efficient natural or mechanical ventilating system
26 when necessary for safe operation. In addition to the
27 requirements imposed by this section, all vessels shall comply



28 with all federal regulations applicable to vessels of such
29 classification.

30 (2) For purposes of this subsection, "personal watercraft"
31 means a vessel which uses an inboard motor powering a water jet
32 pump and which is designed to be operated by a person sitting,
33 standing or kneeling on the vessel, rather than the conventional
34 manner of sitting or standing inside the vessel. A person shall
35 not operate a personal watercraft unless each person on board or
36 being towed behind is wearing a * * * personal flotation device
37 approved by the United States Coast Guard.

38 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
39 and after July 1, 2012.

