

By: Representative Holloway

To: Marine Resources

HOUSE BILL NO. 1144

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 59-21-81, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
2 TO REQUIRE ALL INDIVIDUALS ON BOARD CERTAIN VESSELS TO WEAR A
3 PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICE WHILE SUCH VESSEL IS UNDERWAY; AND FOR
4 RELATED PURPOSES.

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

6 **SECTION 1.** This act shall be known and may be cited as the
7 "Gunner Palmer and Zeb Hughes Act."

8 **SECTION 2.** Section 59-21-81, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
9 amended as follows:

10 59-21-81. (1) Every vessel shall have on board a Coast
11 Guard approved personal flotation device for each person aboard
12 such vessel, and every person * * * on board a motorboat,
13 sailboat, or vessel which measures less than twenty-six (26) feet
14 in length shall wear a type I, II, or III Coast Guard approved
15 personal flotation device while such motorboat, sailboat, or
16 vessel is underway. For the purpose of this section "underway"
17 shall mean at all times except when a motorboat, sailboat, or
18 vessel is anchored, moored, or aground. Every vessel shall have
19 lights during the hours of darkness, which comply with all federal



20 regulations applicable to vessels of its classification. Such
21 vessel shall not be operated unless in a safe and seaworthy
22 condition; the owner and operator shall employ such safety devices
23 as may be necessary for the safe operation of such vessel,
24 including an efficient natural or mechanical ventilating system
25 when necessary for safe operation. In addition to the
26 requirements imposed by this section, all vessels shall comply
27 with all federal regulations applicable to vessels of such
28 classification.

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

38 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
39 and after July 1, 2022.

