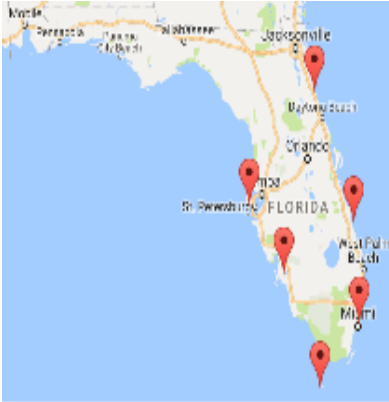


## Florida's Anchoring Program Update 1/30/17 MTOA

Boaters' rights to anchor in public waterways are under attack again in Florida. **SSCA**, MTOA, and AGLCA, are raising money to fund a professional lobbyist to defend our rights. The lobbyist team Capitol Access, Tallahassee, is now representing boaters from unjustified regulations. Help us to stop the attack on Florida's anchorage areas. Please donate TODAY: [www.mtoa.net](http://www.mtoa.net) <Highlight Tab> **"BOATERS' RIGHTS FUND"**



Many wealthy Florida waterside residents, condominium units and cities complained to their local governments about anchoring boats spoiling their water views. Federal government owns the land under waterways and relinquished semi-control to Florida state. This anti-anchoring consortium contacted their state representatives to change the law to prohibit anchoring in front of their waterside property

Florida enacted a study called Anchoring and Mooring Pilot Program in 2009. The study is to be completed July 1, 2017. Final recommendations to be submitted by January 1, 2018. The multi-million dollar 244-page report is available for review. "Anchoring and Mooring Pilot Program Final Report of Findings and Recommendations 12/21/2016" in Adobe PDF. During last year's legislative season the report was accepted as submitted. 2017 is the final year. Florida legislature has stated they will accept the state recommendations for state law. The report has several anti-anchoring provisions that must be changed to better represent the needs of the boating community. One glaring item of concern; If enacted, county governments can easily contact the state for an exemption to control and regulate local anchoring without any input from the boating community. *The unintended consequence of the legislation would be the precedent it would set for other states along the eastern seaboard to follow banning anchoring.*

A large **"AHOY MATE"** call is now being made to fellow boaters. As a boating community, we can be complacent, stand back and complain when our previously used anchoring areas are no longer available or put on some heavy weather gear and ride the storm out while still keeping the heading. This will ensure future anchorage availability for us and our children. How is this accomplished? As any

boater knows you must have the right gear. 1) We need a knowledgeable professional lobbyist. 2) Money is required for this lobbyist: \$35k, 3) How do we get the funds? The boating community unites and individual boaters to donate as they can. Marine Trawler Owners Association (MTOA) has engaged the services of Capitol Access, an outstanding lobbying firm with offices in Tallahassee to represent all boaters interest from unjustified regulation upon the waterways., Today combined funds from members of American Great Loop Cruising Association (AGLCA), and Seven Seas Cruising Association (SSCA) are assisting with contributions from their membership. Additional funds are required to continue a pro- anchoring strategy to roll back unjustified regulation of anti-anchoring language in the proposed bill. Your support is requested. Marine Trawlers Owners Association has set up the following site for your donations from the boating community at large: Go to:

[www.mtoa.net](http://www.mtoa.net) highlight tab “FL Anchoring Rights Fund”

We need your financial support. The following is a time progression review demonstrating the need for a professional lobbyists and active boater participation to win the pro-anchoring debate.

## **2017**

2016 over whelming defeat for pro-anchoring advocates required a change in tactics for boaters right to anchor. MTOA closely reviewed the situation and with board consensus agreed a professional Lobbyists was required to prevent 2016 outcome for the 2107 legislative season.

We have now finalized the engagement and compliance registrations for our lobbyist in the Capitol (Jerry Paul of Capitol Access). As you may know, Jerry is a member of MTOA, SSCA, AGLCA and DeFever Cruisers. He is an active cruiser, a former marine engineer, merchant mariner, attorney and former elected member of the Florida Legislature. He lead our successful efforts in Tallahassee 2 years ago under the lead of SSCA.

This year MTOA is the lead client and coordinator working closely with Jerry. Special thanks to SSCA and AGLCA for joining the team and for providing additional funding support for the effort. Thank you also for the contributions by members of our organizations and others such as the DeFever Cruisers.

We are up and running. Jerry is in communication with key legislators who will be involved in this process throughout Florida's Annual 60-day Legislative Session which begins on March 7. There are 3 remaining "Committee Weeks" that will occur prior to March 7 during which legislators will be filing bills and even holding hearings in preparation for the regular session.

Through the counsel of our lobbyist, we will apply the approach that worked well when we were last organized a couple of sessions ago. For example, he will keep us updated regularly as he collects information. Through him we will coordinate effective messaging (some wholesale and some retail) that leverages our vast number of cruisers and the merits of our position. But, it is important that we maintain control of the message. It needs to be tailored to the specific issues that are critical to the moment as legislation makes its way through multiple committees comprised of different elected members (and staff), each with unique perspectives. Our messaging must be respectful and

professional. Finally, it must be timed precisely and targeted surgically in varying ways (email, phone, and even personal appearances in Committees). This is a running process so timing is important. Mike Bodin, MTOA, Public Advocate will be coordinating these activities.

So far, it appears as though there will be a bill filed that implements some of the recommendations of the Report by the FWC (Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission) which was prepared to summarize the results of the Anchoring and Mooring Pilot Project that expires this year. This is the report that was recently heard by the Senate Environment Committee (the committee that originated the language a couple years ago, that including certain anchoring bans). A draft of the bill is not yet available. We are in communication with the key likely sponsors and we're already messaging our opposition to such bans. So far, it appears we have some key members who associate with our view. We are hopeful that the initial draft(s) will not include the adverse provisions. If it does, we will work to get it removed. If it does not, we must be vigilant until the end of the Session to ensure that the adverse language does not get amended into it.

We will report on these developments and follow up with effective calls-to-action by our members and all who share our desire to preserve Florida's rich maritime history of freedom to safely anchor throughout the public's coastal waters of the State

## **2016 REVIEW**

Yeas, represent the Anti- Anchoring votes by the committees and legislature:

1/26/16 House Committee Vote yeas 12 Nays 0

2/25/16 House Committee Vote yeas 15 Nays 1 Note: Extreme spread

3/04/16 House Vote yeas 105 Nays 12

3/07/16 Senate Vote yeas 36 Nays 2

3/09/16 Signed by officers and presented to Governor HJ 980

3/24/16 Approved and signed by Florida's Governor Rick Scott (chapter 2016-96)

7/01/16 Effective Date for state law banning anchoring by county designation. The state law banned overnight anchoring within areas of Broward and Miami-Dade counties.

Once it was seen there was no opposition from pro- anchoring groups, anti-anchoring legislation emerged and gathered enough momentum to easily pass. Do not underestimate the extent to which that momentum is perceived to still exist in Tallahassee. It was quite evident at the Senate Environment Committee (the Committee that originated the bill we defeated 2 years ago). Notice that this Committee chose to place the topic on its agenda early in the process. The cruising/anchoring interests have been unrepresented for a while and that has been noticed.

Note: The boating community was complacent. No Lobbyists, No boating community involvement. Capitol Access was not retained.

## **2015 REVIEW**

No set back or anchoring restrictions—Capitol Access, Active Lobbyists, Active boating community

## **2014-2012 REVIEW**

No set back or anchoring restrictions—Capitol Access, Active Lobbyists, Active boating community

It can plainly be observed if boaters are again complacent in 2017, the 2016 results can be expected. We salute such groups as American Great Loop Cruising Association, Seven Seas Cruising Association, Marine Trawler Owners Association, and DeFever Cruisers for their active and financial support. These great organizations have started the process. Now your financial support is needed to continue.

Donation site [www.mtoa.net](http://www.mtoa.net) highlight tab “FL Anchoring Rights Fund”

Mike Bodin MTOA Public Advocate