Ohio Legislative Service Commission

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Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

Bill: Am. H.B. 29 of the 130th G.A. **Date**: May 1, 2013

Status: As Reported by House Agriculture and Natural Resources **Sponsor**: Rep. Damschroder

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

Contents: Establishes conditions for watercraft safety inspections

State Fiscal Highlights

- The Division of Watercraft within the Department of Natural Resources could incur minimal administrative costs as a result of the revised authority governing vessel safety inspections under the bill. The Division of Watercraft is supported by motor fuel taxes, watercraft registration fees, and fine revenue deposited into the Waterways Safety Fund (Fund 7086).
- Fund 7086 could potentially lose a minimal amount of fine revenue if fewer watercraft stops are made under the revised inspection authority under the bill.

Local Fiscal Highlights

- Local governments may incur minimal losses in fine revenue if fewer stops are made by local law enforcement officers under the bill's revised authority to conduct vessel safety inspections.

Detailed Fiscal Analysis

Under current law, state watercraft officers may stop and board vessels to conduct safety inspections for the purpose of enforcing laws and rules under their jurisdiction. The bill removes this general authority and instead allows state watercraft officers or other law enforcement officers to conduct such inspections only when such officers (1) have a reasonable suspicion of a violation of the Watercraft and Waterways Law or rules adopted under it, or other applicable state and local laws, rules, or regulations, or (2) are conducting a vessel safety inspection at an authorized checkpoint pursuant to rules adopted by the Chief of the Division of Watercraft. Additionally, the bill exempts individuals who possess valid merchant mariner credentials issued by the U.S. Coast Guard from the current requirement to complete an approved safe boater course or proficiency examination in order to operate a boat powered by more than ten horsepower.

The Division of Watercraft is supported by a portion of the state's motor fuel tax, watercraft registration fees, and fines. These receipts are deposited into the Waterways Safety Fund (Fund 7086). There are not likely to be substantial new costs to the state or to local governments as a result of the changes under the bill. It is possible that there could be fewer watercraft stops, and thus potentially fewer violations found. If so, this could mean a minimal loss in fine revenue for Fund 7086 or local governments. There could also be some minimal administrative costs for the Division of Watercraft to develop rules concerning vessel safety inspection checkpoints.

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