**South Carolina General Assembly**

126th Session, 2025-2026

**S. 167**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

General Bill

Sponsors: Senator Campsen

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Introduced in the Senate on January 14, 2025

Currently residing in the Senate Committee on **Fish, Game and Forestry**

Summary: South Carolina Waterways Protection Act

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

Date Body Action Description with journal page number

1/14/2025 Senate Introduced and read first time

1/14/2025 Senate Referred to Committee on **Fish, Game and Forestry**

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**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[01/14/2025](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess126_2025-2026/prever/167_20250114.docx)

A bill

TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS SO AS TO ENACT THE “SOUTH CAROLINA WATERWAYS PROTECTION ACT”; BY ADDING SECTION 50‑9‑975 SO AS TO ESTABLISH THE SOUTH CAROLINA WATERWAYS PROTECTION FUND AND THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH REVENUES IN THE FUND MAY BE EXPENDED; AND BY ADDING SECTION 12‑37‑3215 SO AS TO REQUIRE THAT A TAX NOTICE FOR WATERCRAFT MUST INCLUDE A WATERWAYS PROTECTION FEE OF THREE DOLLARS.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. This act may be cited as the “South Carolina Waterways Protection Act”.

SECTION 2. Article 9, Chapter 9, Title 50 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

Section 50‑9‑975. (A) The South Carolina Waterways Protection Fund is created for the purpose of receiving the three‑dollar waterways protection fee that is attached to each tax notice for a watercraft, as provided in Section 12‑37‑3215.

(B) Revenues for the fund must be remitted to the State Treasurer and credited to an account that is separate and distinct from the general fund. Balances in the fund must be retained and carried forward annually and interest earned on balances in the fund must be credited to the fund.

(C) The fund must only be used by the department for the following purposes:

(1) the removal of hazardous, abandoned, or unattended vessels, marine debris, or hazards to navigation from the waters of the State;

(2) identification, marking, and lighting of hazards to navigation in accordance with applicable rules governing aids to navigation; and

(3) the development and administration of a grant program to provide funds to applicants, whether public or private, to remove hazardous, abandoned, or unattended vessels, marine debris, or hazards to navigation from the waters of the State.

(D) The department must allocate annual fund revenues for use in the four game zones of this State based upon the number of registered and documented watercraft in each game zone. If the department determines a game zone's proportional allocation is not used or obligated by the end of a fiscal year, then it may distribute up to seventy‑five percent of the unused and unobligated allocation for use in the other game zones on an as‑needed basis. The remaining unused and unobligated allocation must be added to the game zone's proportional allocation for the following fiscal year. For the purpose of this subsection, Game Zone 1 consists of the entirety of Greenville, Oconee, and Pickens Counties and Game Zone 2 consists of no part of Greenville, Oconee, and Pickens Counties.

(E) The South Carolina Office of Resilience, upon request from the department, may assist in the development and administration of a grant program established under this section.

(F) The department must provide an annual report on its website disclosing expenditures from the fund.

SECTION 3. Article 26, Chapter 37, Title 12 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

Section 12‑37‑3215. A tax notice for a watercraft must include a waterways protection fee of three dollars. The fee must be deposited by the county treasurer into the South Carolina Waterways Protection Fund, as established in Section 50‑9‑975. The issuance or renewal of a certificate of number by the Department of Natural Resources is not contingent on the payment of a waterways protection fee.

SECTION 4. This act takes effect on July 1, 2025.

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