

House Bill 849

By: Representative Scott of the 153rd

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 1 of Chapter 7 of Title 52 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 relating to general provisions concerning watercraft, so as to provide definitions; to provide
3 that certain vessels must be equipped with marine radios, emergency position indicating
4 radio beacons, or personal locator beacons; to provide for applicability; to provide for
5 penalties; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

7 **SECTION 1.**

8 Article 1 of Chapter 7 of Title 52 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
9 general provisions concerning watercraft, is amended by adding a new Code section to read
10 as follows:

11 "52-7-8.4.

12 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

13 (1) 'Emergency position indicating radio beacon' means an electronic device that, when
14 activated, transmits a distress call on a designated emergency frequency to a radio or
15 satellite receiver and is used by rescue personnel to locate the position of the signal.

16 (2) 'Personal locator beacon' means an electronic device operating at 406 MHz as a
17 Category 1 PLB as defined by the Radio Technical Commission for Maritime Services.

18 (3) 'Vessel' means every description of watercraft, other than a seaplane on water, used
19 or capable of being used as a means of transportation on the water.

20 (b) No person shall operate any vessel required to be numbered by a state or documented
21 by the United States Coast Guard or any manual or sail propelled vessels not required to
22 be numbered by a state or documented by the United States Coast Guard on any coastal
23 waters within the jurisdiction of this state beyond one mile of shore unless such vessel is
24 equipped with a properly functioning fixed mount or handheld marine VHF-FM radio
25 (156-162 MHz band), an emergency position indicating radio beacon, or a personal locator
26 beacon.

1 (c) Emergency position indicating radio beacons shall be approved by the Federal
2 Communications Commission and COSPAS-SARSAT, an international search and rescue
3 organization. The emergency position indicating radio beacons shall be registered with the
4 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

5 (d) This Code section shall not apply to canoes, kayaks, personal watercraft, and training
6 sailboats when such vessels are accompanied by at least one vessel that complies with
7 subsection (b) of this Code section.

8 (c) Any person who violates this Code section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor."

9 **SECTION 2.**

10 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.