



February 22, 2024

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**ENGROSSED**  
**SENATE BILL No. 253**

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DIGEST OF SB 253 (Updated February 21, 2024 12:28 pm - DI 148)

**Citations Affected:** IC 14-8; IC 14-15.

**Synopsis:** Lake Michigan rescue equipment. Requires the owner of a pier or public access site on Lake Michigan to install public rescue equipment, including at least one ring life buoy, on the pier or public access site. Establishes requirements concerning ring life buoys installed on piers and public access sites. Provides that the end of the buoy line must not be secured to the shore. Requires a unit of local  
(Continued next page)

**Effective:** July 1, 2024.

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**Pol Jr., Glick, Bohacek, Dernulc,  
Leising, Qaddoura, Alexander,  
Vinzant, Tomes, Doriot,  
Randolph Lonnie M, Buck**

(HOUSE SPONSORS — PRESSEL, ANDRADE, MOSELEY, BOY)

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January 11, 2024, read first time and referred to Committee on Natural Resources.  
January 29, 2024, reported favorably — Do Pass.  
February 5, 2024, read second time, amended, ordered engrossed.  
February 6, 2024, engrossed. Read third time, passed. Yeas 48, nays 0.

HOUSE ACTION

February 12, 2024, read first time and referred to Committee on Natural Resources.  
February 22, 2024, amended, reported — Do Pass.

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ES 253—LS 6787/DI 150



## Digest Continued

government that owns one or more piers or public access sites on Lake Michigan, at least twice per year, to publish on the unit's website a report on lakefront drownings that occur within 50 feet of the unit's piers or public access sites. Provides that if more than one fatal drowning occurs not more than 50 feet from a particular pier or public access site in a span of five years, the owner of the pier or public access site shall: (1) disseminate in the area of the pier or public access site a water safety plan pertaining to the pier or public access site; and (2) upgrade the public rescue equipment installed on the pier or public access site, such as by installing equipment that automatically contacts the local 911 service in an emergency.

**ES 253—LS 6787/DI 150**



February 22, 2024

Second Regular Session of the 123rd General Assembly (2024)

PRINTING CODE. Amendments: Whenever an existing statute (or a section of the Indiana Constitution) is being amended, the text of the existing provision will appear in this style type, additions will appear in **this style type**, and deletions will appear in ~~this style type~~.

Additions: Whenever a new statutory provision is being enacted (or a new constitutional provision adopted), the text of the new provision will appear in **this style type**. Also, the word **NEW** will appear in that style type in the introductory clause of each SECTION that adds a new provision to the Indiana Code or the Indiana Constitution.

Conflict reconciliation: Text in a statute in *this style type* or ~~this style type~~ reconciles conflicts between statutes enacted by the 2023 Regular Session of the General Assembly.

## ENGROSSED SENATE BILL No. 253

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A BILL FOR AN ACT to amend the Indiana Code concerning natural and cultural resources.

*Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Indiana:*

1 SECTION 1. IC 14-8-2-204.8 IS ADDED TO THE INDIANA  
2 CODE AS A **NEW** SECTION TO READ AS FOLLOWS  
3 [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2024]: **Sec. 204.8. "Pier", for purposes of**  
4 **IC 14-15-14, has the meaning set forth in IC 14-15-14-1(1).**

5 SECTION 2. IC 14-8-2-221.9 IS ADDED TO THE INDIANA  
6 CODE AS A **NEW** SECTION TO READ AS FOLLOWS  
7 [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2024]: **Sec. 221.9. "Public access site", for**  
8 **purposes of IC 14-15-14, has the meaning set forth in**  
9 **IC 14-15-14-1(2).**

10 SECTION 3. IC 14-8-2-225.4 IS ADDED TO THE INDIANA  
11 CODE AS A **NEW** SECTION TO READ AS FOLLOWS  
12 [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2024]: **Sec. 225.4. "Public rescue**  
13 **equipment", for purposes of IC 14-15-14, has the meaning set forth**  
14 **in IC 14-15-14-1(3).**

15 SECTION 4. IC 14-8-2-289, AS AMENDED BY P.L.82-2005,  
16 SECTION 1, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE  
17 JULY 1, 2024]: **Sec. 289. "Unit of local government", for purposes of**

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1 IC 14-12-1, **IC 14-15-14**, and IC 14-22-10, means a:

- 2 (1) county;  
 3 (2) city;  
 4 (3) town; or  
 5 (4) township;

6 located in Indiana.

7 SECTION 5. IC 14-15-14 IS ADDED TO THE INDIANA CODE  
 8 AS A NEW CHAPTER TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE  
 9 JULY 1, 2024]:

10 **Chapter 14. Lake Michigan Public Rescue Equipment**

11 **Sec. 1. The following definitions apply throughout this chapter:**

12 (1) "Pier" means a manmade, raised structure (such as a  
 13 breakwater) that:

14 (A) extends into navigable water; and

15 (B) is intended:

16 (i) for use as a landing place or promenade; or

17 (ii) to protect or form a harbor.

18 (2) "Public access site" means a site that is:

19 (A) adjacent to the public trust (as described in  
 20 IC 14-26-2.1-3); and

21 (B) intended to facilitate direct public access to the public  
 22 trust.

23 The term does not include a private residence. The term also  
 24 does not include an area of state owned property where  
 25 swimming is prohibited or where a life guard is on duty.

26 (3) "Public rescue equipment" means water rescue devices  
 27 available for public use in case of an emergency, including  
 28 ring life buoys, throw bags, rescue tubes, and rescue poles.

29 **Sec. 2. (a) The owner of a pier or public access site on Lake  
 30 Michigan shall install public rescue equipment on the pier or  
 31 public access site. The public rescue equipment installed on a pier  
 32 or public access site under this subsection:**

33 (1) must include at least one (1) ring life buoy; and

34 (2) may include other types of public rescue equipment.

35 **(b) The owner of a pier or public access site on Lake Michigan:**

36 (1) shall oversee the installation and maintenance of the public  
 37 rescue equipment required by this section; and

38 (2) if the owner is the state of Indiana or a unit of local  
 39 government, shall also provide public education concerning  
 40 the public rescue equipment installed on the pier or public  
 41 access site.

42 **Sec. 3. (a) The following apply to a ring life buoy installed on a**



1 pier or public access site under section 2(a) of this chapter:

2 (1) The ring life buoy must not be permanently secured in any  
3 way to a station, rack, or pier.

4 (2) The ring life buoy must be stowed inside a station to  
5 protect it from constant weather exposure.

6 (3) The ring life buoy must meet the requirements of:

7 (A) 46 CFR 160.050; or

8 (B) 46 CFR 160.150;

9 for Safety Of Life At Sea (SOLAS) approved equipment, or  
10 must meet other standards for public rescue equipment issued  
11 by the United States Coast Guard.

12 (4) There must be attached to each ring life buoy a buoyant  
13 line:

14 (A) that:

15 (i) is at least one hundred (100) feet long; or

16 (ii) if the ring life buoy is secured to a station, rack, or  
17 pier more than fifty (50) feet away from the Lake  
18 Michigan shoreline, is at least twenty-five (25) feet  
19 longer than the distance between the station, rack, or  
20 pier to which the ring life buoy is secured and the Lake  
21 Michigan shoreline;

22 (B) that has a breaking strength of at least five (5)  
23 kilonewtons; and

24 (C) the end of which must not be secured to the shore.

25 (5) The ring life buoy must be marked with type II  
26 retroreflective material meeting the requirements of 46 CFR  
27 164.018.

28 (6) The ring life buoy:

29 (A) must be placed not more than two hundred (200) feet  
30 from the shoreline of Lake Michigan; and

31 (B) must be available for emergency rescue operations.

32 (b) A station in which a ring life buoy is stowed under  
33 subsection (a)(2) must:

34 (1) be a bright orange, red, or yellow color for high visibility  
35 to aid with quick access to the ring life buoy; and

36 (2) bear signage that warns lakefront patrons that tampering  
37 with or misusing public rescue equipment is strictly  
38 prohibited.

39 Sec. 4. (a) A unit of local government that owns one (1) or more  
40 piers or public access sites on Lake Michigan shall:

41 (1) compile information; and

42 (2) at least twice per year, publish on the unit's website a



1           **report;**  
 2           **on lakefront drownings of which the unit is aware that have**  
 3           **occurred within fifty (50) feet of a pier or public access site owned**  
 4           **by the unit of local government.**

5           **(b) A report published under subsection (a)(2) must include at**  
 6           **least the following information:**

7           **(1) The location of each drowning.**

8           **(2) The time of day at which the drowning occurred and the**  
 9           **temperature and weather conditions at the time and place of**  
 10           **the drowning.**

11           **(3) A description of:**

12           **(A) the public rescue equipment that was accessible at the**  
 13           **pier or public access site within fifty (50) feet of the place**  
 14           **of the drowning;**

15           **(B) how the public rescue equipment described under**  
 16           **clause (A) may be used; and**

17           **(C) the type of entry into the water of Lake Michigan that**  
 18           **is available at the pier or public access site within fifty (50)**  
 19           **feet of the place of the drowning.**

20           **(c) If a drowning has occurred within fifty (50) feet of a pier or**  
 21           **public access site owned by a unit of local government since the**  
 22           **previous report of the unit of local government was published**  
 23           **under subsection (a)(2), the unit of local government shall publish**  
 24           **on its website, in addition to the report required by subsection**  
 25           **(a)(2), a water safety plan pertaining to the pier or public access**  
 26           **site.**

27           **Sec. 5. If more than one (1) drowning occurs not more than fifty**  
 28           **(50) feet from a particular pier or public access site in a span of**  
 29           **five (5) years, the owner of the pier or public access site shall:**

30           **(1) disseminate in the area of the pier or public access site a**  
 31           **water safety plan pertaining to the pier or public access site;**  
 32           **and**

33           **(2) upgrade the public rescue equipment installed on the pier**  
 34           **or public access site under section 2(a) of this chapter, such as**  
 35           **by installing equipment that automatically contacts the local**  
 36           **911 service in an emergency.**

37           **Sec. 6. The department shall adopt rules under IC 4-22-2 to**  
 38           **implement this chapter.**



## COMMITTEE REPORT

Madam President: The Senate Committee on Natural Resources, to which was referred Senate Bill No. 253, has had the same under consideration and begs leave to report the same back to the Senate with the recommendation that said bill DO PASS.

(Reference is to SB 253 as introduced.)

GLICK, Chairperson

Committee Vote: Yeas 8, Nays 0

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 SENATE MOTION

Madam President: I move that Senate Bill 253 be amended to read as follows:

Page 3, line 33, delete "orange or yellow color for high visibility to aid" and insert "**orange, red, or yellow color for high visibility to aid**".

(Reference is to SB 253 as printed January 30, 2024.)

POL JR.

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 COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Speaker: Your Committee on Natural Resources, to which was referred Senate Bill 253, has had the same under consideration and begs leave to report the same back to the House with the recommendation that said bill be amended as follows:

Page 2, delete lines 23 through 24, begin a new line block indented and insert:

**"The term does not include a private residence. The term also does not include an area of state owned property where swimming is prohibited or where a life guard is on duty."**

and when so amended that said bill do pass.

(Reference is to SB 253 as reprinted February 6, 2024.)

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LINDAUER

Committee Vote: yeas 7, nays 1.

