A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO COMMERCIAL OCEAN RECREATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that many tourists who visit the State participate in watersports in state waters, such as snorkeling, scuba diving, kayaking, and surfing lessons. There are companies that conduct commercial operations that take customers on excursions in state waters for the purpose of engaging in recreation activities. These commercial operations are required to obtain a permit from the department of land and natural resources division of boating and ocean recreation. However, the provisions for obtaining those permits do not include safety requirements, which can lead to potential consumer safety issues.

The legislature further finds that House Concurrent Resolution No. 86, H.D. 1, S.D. 1, adopted in 2015, requested the department of land and natural resources to engage stakeholders to consider adopting permitting provisions requiring employees of companies who take customers on watersport excursions to be trained in basic water safety
measures. However, the legislature finds that the department of land and natural resources has not taken action to carry out the provisions of H.C.R. No. 86, H.D. 1, S.D. 1 (2015) since the concurrent resolution was adopted.

The purpose of this Act is to provide increased customer safety measures by requiring the department of land and natural resources to adopt rules regulating commercial ocean operators that take customers into state waters to engage in activities such as snorkeling, scuba diving, kayaking, and surfing lessons.

SECTION 2. The department of land and natural resources shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91, Hawaii Revised Statutes, by July 1, 2020, regulating commercial ocean operators that take customers into state waters for the purpose of engaging in activities such as snorkeling, scuba diving, kayaking, and surfing lessons.

In adopting these rules, the department shall require:

(1) Each tour group or excursion to include one individual who is a rescue diver or lifeguard certified by a nationally recognized certification organization; provided that this requirement shall not apply to vessels that are inspected by the United States Coast
Guard and that have at least one individual crew member aboard the vessel who is lifeguard certified in cardio pulmonary resuscitation, use of an automated external defibrillator, and basic first aid; and

(2) Each vessel used by commercial operators to transport customers for the purpose of engaging in an activity in state waters to have a backboard, emergency oxygen, and an automated external defibrillator included in its onboard safety equipment.

SECTION 3. The department of land and natural resources shall submit reports of the actions taken pursuant to this Act as follows:

(1) A preliminary report to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2020; and

(2) A final report to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2021.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.
Report Title:
Commercial Ocean Recreation; Safety Measures; Watersports

Description:
Requires the Department of Land and Natural Resources to adopt rules pursuant to Chapter 91, HRS, to require certain safety measures for commercial ocean operators that take customers into state waters for activities such as snorkeling, scuba diving, kayaking, and surfing lessons. (HB1151 HD1)

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