
CONSENT

Bill No: AB 1571
Author: Michelle Rodriguez (D)
Introduced: 1/12/26
Vote: 21

SENATE HEALTH COMMITTEE: 10-0, 6/10/26
AYES: Weber Pierson, Valladares, Caballero, Durazo, Grove, Menjivar, Padilla,
Pérez, Rubio, Smallwood-Cuevas
NO VOTE RECORDED: Gonzalez

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 64-0, 4/9/26 (Consent) - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Product safety: recreational water safety: wearable personal
flotation devices: infants and children

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This bill updates the definition in existing law for “wearable personal flotation device” to include a “swim vest,” rather than “puddle jumper.”

ANALYSIS:

Existing federal law permits the USCG to prescribe regulations for the design, construction, performance, testing, carriage, use, and inspection of lifesaving equipment on commercial and recreational vessels. [46 U.S. Code §4102(b) and §4502(c)]

Existing state law:

- 1) Defines “wearable personal flotation device” as a lifejacket, puddle jumper, water wings, or other flotation device designed to be worn or attached to the body of an infant or child. [Health and Safety Code (HSC) §116023]
- 2) Prohibits a person or entity from manufacturing, selling, distributing, delivering, holding, or offering for sale in commerce in this state a wearable

personal flotation device that is not approved by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG).
[HSC §116023.5]

This bill deletes the term “puddle jumper” from the definition of “wearable personal flotation device,” and adds the term “swim vest” to the definition.

Comments

According to the author of this bill:

The original legislation that put statute into law is very important. Banning personal floatation devices not approved by the USCG protects families from purchasing products not intended to preserve a life. However, some products in this category, particularly those sold under the trademark “Puddle Jumper,” may be unfairly affected in current statute. These products could be banned in California despite being approved by the USCG. This bill is making a simple but necessary change to resolve this issue.

Background

Wearable personal floatation devices. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 85% of people who drowned while boating in 2022 were not wearing a life jacket. The CDC highlights that life jackets reduce the risk of drowning while boating for people of all ages and swimming abilities. They should be used by children for all activities in and around natural water, as well as by weaker swimmers of all ages in and around natural water and swimming pools. The USCG states that all personal flotation devices must be evaluated and tested by a Coast Guard recognized laboratory. The recognized laboratory evaluates the product, conducts necessary testing, certifies compliant devices, and conducts factory inspections. The USCG categorizes personal flotation devices, also commonly referred to as lifejackets and buoyancy aids, as: commercial, recreational, and throwable personal flotation devices.

Despite the fact that the USCG does not recognize floaties and water wings as safe personal flotation devices, a 2022 survey conducted by The Harris Poll on behalf of the Pool & Hot Tub Alliance found that 66% of parents believe that floaties and water wings keep children safe in the water. In fact, floaties and water wings are categorized as toys by the U.S. Consumer product commission, and are instead required to meet the American Society for Testing Materials International (ASTM) toy standards. ASTM F963-17 toy standards requires all aquatic toys to carry safety labeling, consisting of the signal word “WARNING” and contain, at a minimum, the following text: “This is not a lifesaving device. Do not leave a child

unattended while the device is in use.” The ASTM also prohibits any text or graphics that state or imply that a child will be safe with such a toy if left unsupervised. To help prevent drownings as well as prevent the false sense of security created by floaties and water wings, AB 2146 (Rodriguez, Chapter 307, Statutes of 2024) prohibits a person or entity from manufacturing, selling, distributing, delivering, holding, or offering for sale in commerce in this state a wearable personal flotation device that is not approved by the USCG.

Puddle Jumper vs swim vest. AB 2146 defines a “wearable personal flotation device” as a lifejacket, puddle jumper, water wings, or other flotation device designed to be worn or attached to the body of an infant or child. A swim vest is a flotation device for toddlers and small children that helps them stay afloat and build confidence when learning how to swim. Consumer Reports states that a Puddle Jumper is a type of swim vest with connected arm and chest flotation components, and are designed as buoyancy aids for infants and small children to help them stay afloat and maintain an upright position in the water. While Puddle Jumpers is the original brand name trademarked by Bestway, Inc., similar items on the market exist, such as the Speedo Swim Star. The USCG Maritime Information Exchange Approved Equipment List includes the trademarked Bestway Puddle Jumpers as approved for use as a personal flotation device in, on, or near the water. According to the author, removing the trademark name from the definition of “wearable personal flotation device” would avoid unnecessary scrutiny on the brand Puddle Jumpers, whilst still capturing the product within the term “swim vest.”

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: No Local: No

SUPPORT: (Verified 6/11/2026)

None received

OPPOSITION: (Verified 6/11/2026)

None received

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 64-0, 4/9/26

AYES: Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Bains, Berman, Boerner, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Fong, Gabriel, Garcia, Gipson, Mark González, Hadwick, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Michelle

Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Sharp-Collins, Solache,
Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Rivas
NO VOTE RECORDED: Addis, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett,
Bonta, Bryan, Flora, Gallagher, Jeff Gonzalez, Haney, Kalra, Ortega, Celeste
Rodriguez, Schultz, Zbur

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