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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

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A N A C T

RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- BALLOONS

Introduced By: Senators Sosnowski, Ruggerio, McCaffrey, Coyne, and Euer

Date Introduced: January 19, 2021

Referred To: Senate Environment & Agriculture

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. The Public Laws are amended so as to state the policy of the State of Rhode  
2 Island with regard to the release of balloons.

3 (a) Legislative findings:

4 (1) It is hereby found and declared as follows:

5 (i) That the release of balloons inflated with lighter-than-air gases pose a danger and  
6 nuisance to the environment, particularly to wildlife and marine animals;

7 (ii) That many animals are attracted to the bright colors of balloons and mistake them for  
8 food which may cause an animal severe injury or death;

9 (iii) That many animals have become entangled in balloon strings and are injured or  
10 strangled to death as a result thereof.

11 (b) The general assembly has determined that prohibiting the release of balloons inflated  
12 with lighter-than-air gases, statewide, is the most effective means of achieving a significant  
13 reduction in balloon debris and the environmental harm this debris causes.

14 SECTION 2. Title 23 of the General Laws entitled "HEALTH AND SAFETY" is hereby  
15 amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

16 CHAPTER 95

17 PROHIBITED RELEASE OF BALLOONS

18 23-95-1. Prohibited practices.

19 (a) No person or entity shall intentionally release, intentionally organize the release of, or

1 otherwise intentionally cause the release of a balloon inflated with a gas that is lighter than air,

2 except for:

3 (1) A balloon released for scientific or meteorological purposes, on behalf of a  
4 governmental agency or pursuant to a governmental contract;

5 (2) A hot air balloon that is recovered after launching; or

6 (3) A balloon that is released and remains indoors.

7 **23-95-2. Penalties.**

8 Any person or entity who violates this section shall be subject to a civil penalty of up to  
9 five hundred dollars (\$500) for each offense. The release of multiple balloons at one time shall be  
10 considered a single offense for the purposes of this section.

11 **23-95-3. Regulations.**

12 The department of environmental management shall promulgate rules and regulations as  
13 may be necessary to implement and carry out the provisions of this chapter.

14 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect on January 1, 2022.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- BALLOONS

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1           This act would prohibit the intentional release of a balloon inflated with lighter-than-air  
2 gas. The prohibition would not apply to: a balloon released for scientific or metrological purposes  
3 on behalf of a governmental agency or pursuant to a governmental contract; a hot air balloon that  
4 is recovered after launching; or a balloon that is released and remains indoors. A person or entity  
5 that violates this provision would be subject to a civil penalty of up to five hundred dollars (\$500)  
6 for each offense. The release of multiple balloons at one time would be considered a single offense.

7           This act would take effect on January 1, 2022.

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