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As a resident who has been woken variously at 3:30, 5 and 6 AM from noise from airboats, not to mention regularly being unable to have a conversation in my own back yard due to their usage half a mile away, I am in favor of much stricter limits both on their permitted hours of operation and emitted noise levels.

To the extent that they are absolutely essential for working clammers or fishermen, or in search and rescue or other operations, my hope is that the state can find a reasonable compromise.

But aircraft are heavily regulated, both in time and location of operations, for a reason, and the reason is that they are prohibitively loud and disruptive otherwise. Given that an airboat is essentially an aircraft engine operating at ground level, I see no reason why its usage should not be similarly regulated. At present, a huge majority of residents - virtually anyone who lives within a mile or so of the coast - has been impacted by a tiny minority of airboat operators, some of whom are merely using the boats as leisure craft. That seems inappropriate.

I thank the committee for its work, and hope that it will seek an equitable solution for all of the parties that balances impact with operations.