



March 3, 2008

Judiciary Committee  
Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: **Bill No. 5032, An Act Concerning Operation of a Vessel While Under the Influence of Intoxicating Liquor or Drugs.**

Chairmen McDonald and Lawler;  
Distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee, the Connecticut Marine Trades Association (CMTA) urges you to support **Bill No. 5032, An Act Concerning Operation of a Vessel While Under the Influence of Intoxicating Liquor or Drugs**. This bill changes the applicable offense when a person causes the death of another with a vessel when under the influence of liquor or drugs. It would upgrade the offense from reckless operation of a vessel in the first degree to manslaughter in the second degree with a vessel, a class C felony. Loss of life in a boating accident in Connecticut is far from being a common occurrence. For the most part, Connecticut boaters are well trained and knowledgeable on the water due to this states mature Safety Boating Program, now in its 16<sup>th</sup> year, administered by the Department of Environmental Protection. Mandatory education and proctored testing have made significant gains in the safety of the boating public. Connecticut's program has been nationally recognized as a great step forward in waterfront safety and CMTA has been involved in the program development and supported it since the very beginning. Increasing the penalty for causing a loss of life is an appropriate step to make the punishment fit the offense. Accidents involving liquor or drugs usually can be avoided if the liquor or drugs were not involved. These are preventable accidents with unnecessary injuries and the results of such actions should be as significant as the causes. We urge you to support **Bill No. 5032, An Act Concerning Operation of a Vessel While Under the Influence of Intoxicating Liquor or Drugs**. It is an appropriate measure to take to align the punishment with the offense. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill and please know that we are available to discuss this at any time.

Sincerely,

  
John S. Johnson  
Legislative Chair

  
Grant W. Westerson  
Executive Director

  
Linda A. Kowalski  
The Kowalski Group, LLC