

CONNECTICUT MARINE TRADES ASSOCIATION

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February 23, 2009

Environment Committee
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: **Proposed Bill No. 5505 AAC the Allocation Of Certain Boating Fees**

Chairmen Meyer and Roy;

Distinguished members of the Environment Committee, the Connecticut Marine Trades Association (CMTA) urges you to not support **Proposed Bill No. 5505 AAC the Allocation Of Certain Boating Fees**.

The Recreational Marine Industry in Connecticut has over 450 businesses and employ about 10,000 hard working people and every business and every employee has felt the impacts of this disturbing economy. Any increase in boating fees at this time is unwarranted and unnecessary.

- Vessel registration fees in the State of Connecticut are already some of the highest in the country and they are an annual fee. Approximately \$5.6 million is collected from registrations.
- Currently the fees are collected by DMV but most of the funds are used to support the DEP's annual budget (\$3.0 million). DMV keeps \$588,880 to administer the registrations of the approximately 114,000 vessels in Connecticut.
- The balance of almost \$2.4 million is annually distributed to towns in lieu of the property taxes that were dropped years ago. Many of those towns spend little, if any, on boating programs or enforcement.
- The state's General Fund only supplies \$118,000 towards DEP's annual boating budget. Most of the rest of their funding is from Federal sources (\$2.1 million).
- Harbormasters are political appointments made by the Governor, with some direction from Harbor Management Commissions, and paid a stipend of approximately \$750 annually. They are overseen by the Department of Transportation and have duties, very limited, regarding moorings. Enforcement is not one of them.
- No boating fees are currently paid to harbormasters for any reason.

We urge you to not support **Proposed Bill No. 5505 AAC the Allocation Of Certain Boating Fees**. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue 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