



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



Public Hearing - March 4, 2009
Environment Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Gina McCarthy
Department of Environmental Protection

GOVERNOR'S BILL No. 832, AN ACT CONCERNING BOATING SAFETY

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding Governor's Bill No. 832 – AN ACT CONCERNING BOATING SAFETY. The Department of Environmental Protection supported this legislation when it was introduced last year as House Bill Number 5032. As steward of the boating law this bill seeks to change, we continue to support this bill.

Governor's Bill Number 832 seeks to increase penalties and jail time for that person who causes the death of another while operating a vessel when intoxicated. It does so by adding the crime of "manslaughter in the 2nd degree with a vessel" to the boating statutes as a class C felony. Persons convicted of this crime could face imprisonment for up to ten years and a fine of up to \$10,000. Currently, the maximum penalty available to the State under the boating statutes for the same action is a fine of not more than \$5,000 and jail time of not more than two years.

Governor's Bill Number 832 is a measured and appropriate response to the loss of a life to an intoxicated boater, where the maximum punishment available to the State fails to provide satisfaction when weighed against the loss experienced by the victim, the family of the victim, and the State as a whole. Passage of this bill will affirm the value of a human life by increasing penalties and jail time for that person who takes the life of another while operating a vessel when intoxicated.

Attached to our written testimony please find a letter from John M. Johnson, Executive Director, National Association of State Boating Law Administrators in support of the Governor's Bill No. 832

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this bill. If you should require any additional information from the Department of Environmental Protection regarding this bill, please contact the Department's legislative liaison, Robert LaFrance, at 424-3401.

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