CONNECTICUT MARINE TRADES ASSOCIATION

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March 11, 2009

Transportation Committee
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: **Raised Bill No. 6651 AAC the Rights and Responsibilities of Towing Companies with Respect to Motorized Personal Property.**

Chairmen DeFronzo and Guerrera;

Distinguished members of the Transportation Committee, the Connecticut Marine Trades Association (CMTA) urges you to not support **Raised Bill No. 6651 AAC the Rights and Responsibilities of Towing Companies with Respect to Motorized Personal Property**. The Recreational Marine Industry in Connecticut has over 450 businesses employing 10,000 hard working people, all across the state. Boating and marine recreation is an active part of our state's tourism efforts and is responsible for the generation of significant sales and use taxes.

This bill appears to be an attempt to reclassify marine craft and other non automotive vehicles as motor vehicles or "motorized personal property" and to then make them all subject to DMV regulations for towing and storage. Redefining the definitions in CGS Section 14-150 to include watercraft is illogical. Section 14-1 specifically excludes boats and "any other vehicle not suitable for operation on a highway." Section 14-165 also specifically defines a vehicle as a motor vehicle as defined in Section 14-1. Boats and watercraft are not titled vehicles, in fact they are not titled and they are not vehicles, they are watercraft or vessels as defined by the Connecticut General Statutes.

Section 1 (b) of this bill appears to give towing and storage charge authority to DMV. This is an authority that cannot be transferred as it currently rests within the purview of Admiralty Law, generated and defined over hundreds of years of case law. Most of the activities of these vessels take place on waters under federal jurisdiction. This section also attempts to discuss transference of title and developing procedures for such activities on these motorized personal properties. These properties are not titled, therefore transference of title cannot be accomplished and additionally, there are already established procedures for dealing with abandoned vessels and watercraft.

We urge you to not support **Raised Bill No. 6651 AAC the Rights and Responsibilities of Towing Companies with Respect to Motorized Personal Property.** It erroneously refers to marine vessels and products, wrongly categorizes them and attempts to subvert existing federal authorities and history. The existing process is not broken and should be left in place. We would be pleased to discuss these issues at any time.

Sincerely,

John S. Johnson
Legislative Chair

Grant W. Westerson
Executive Director

Linda A. Kowalski
The Kowalski Group