Senator Edward Meyer, Representative Linda M. Gentile and the Environmental Committee
Concerning HR Bill # 6541 hearing on Friday March 8, 2013.
I OPPOSE THIS BILL AND OPPOSE ALLOWING ONLINE COURSES IN BOATER AND HUNTER SAFETY.

I know that your committee is considering changing the law to allow a short on-line computer course to take the place of classroom-based safe boating courses. That's the change in the law that is also is going to allow on-line training for firearms. This is a really bad idea.
Please do not allow this new law to go into effect –

Example 1: (CHOOSE A COUPLE OF THE REASONS BELOW OR USE YOUR OWN - AND FILL THEM OUT IN YOUR OWN WORDS !)
- this rule change has not been well publicized so that the public can comment on it
- on line training is good for some things, but it's not good for "drivers ed" - it can't be good for "boaters ed"
- you can't ask a question of a computer
- you can learn from other students while you are at home taking the course on your laptop
- you learn about boating from boaters - this is a cold computer, not a real person
- I had to work for my "diploma" - why should the new students have it really easy and not know as much as I when boating
- how do you know that the person taking the test is really the person who took the course
- a computer can't show you how to dock a boat - or tell you what mistakes it made while it was learning - A computer cannot properly teach weapons training and safety for hunters and especially for children. This is an unsafe proposal which puts people at risk.

Example 2:
I think that this regulation change is being rushed - it is the first I heard of it. When I took my course in boating safety, I learned as much from the other students in the class, by the questions that they asked, and the interesting way that the teacher answered their questions. Some computers may be able to do this - but it doesn't sound as if this proposal will work that way.

There are lots of things to learn about boating that aren't in the book. If you are sitting at home with your PC, you just can not "hear" what the other students are asking, and what the instructor is telling them. My teacher brought some "training aids" into the class - radios, ropes, charts ... How can students learning through a computer ever "see" what boating is about?

I STRONGLY oppose changing the regulations/laws regarding Boating Safety and Hunter Safety training at this time.

Thank you

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