

For Members of the Environment Committee – re HB 6541

Re: Changes to Boating Regulations

I would like to express my concerns about the proposed amendment relating to the authorization of computer based training for the award of the Safe Boating Certificate. My background has allowed me to be tri-lingual as it applies to this issue. I am very familiar with Computer Based Training ( Dun & Bradstreet Software), Boating (US Navy and a mariner for 40 + years) and an Educator (Certified Instructor by United States Power Squadron for Basic Boating and Seamanship).

Our primary mission is about “Boating Safety”. Specifically we are entrusted to prepare boaters for the safe operation of their vessels for themselves and others. To certify someone to be a safe boater requires more than just having maritime knowledge and the rules of the safe operation. Teaching and honing maritime skills is just as if not more important.

While computer aided instruction is helpful, it is just not enough and cannot replace the interaction between teacher and student. As an example, simple skills in how to coil and throw a line when docking, or using a chart, course plotter and divider to locate a position, or even taking a bearing are fundamental skills that can only be taught with guidance and practical trial and error.

When I was in the US Navy, advancing in grade required not just computer testing we had to demonstrate practical factors. You may not need to know how to tie a bowline with one hand and blindfolded, but you need to know how to tie it quickly and when not to use that knot.

Please reconsider the proposed amendment that authorizes computer based training for the award of the Safe Boating Certificate. In my opinion it will not make our waters and mariners safer. Getting a safe boating certificate is not about convenience or speed it is serious and a rewarding experience to be earned.

Sincerely,

Raymond Martin  
1463 Little Meadow Rd  
Guilford, CT 06437  
203-952-5634