

FEBRUARY 29, 2016

Good morning members of the Transportation Committee. My name is John Johnson. I am Vice Chairman - Legislative Affairs of the CT Marine Trades Association. I am here to offer support for House Bill #5055, "An Act Decreasing Wait Times at DMV." As we all know either personally or by reading in the press, the wait times at DMV throughout the State have been hellacious and inexcusable to say the very least!

To have to stand in line for hours to register a vehicle or a boat or a motorcycle or an all terrain vehicle is simply unacceptable. We very much appreciate that the House has recognized the problem and are preparing to take steps to correct the situation. Your attention to this matter by both the Legislature and the Governor is to be applauded.

Our major concern has always been that the State views boat dealers as tax collectors for the State requiring us to collect any past due taxes owed to a local municipality where the potential purchaser resides. It is unfair to be put in that position. It chases away customers who can just as easily buy the same boat just to the east of us in Rhode Island without all the hassle of having to pay taxes which in fact may be in dispute or unjustified. And I would remind everyone that Rhode Island continues to offer a tax free environment for all boating related expenditures, a fact that continues to be a thorn in our sides.

The lifeblood of the Marine Industry is **NEW BOAT SALES**. Without sales (or diminished sales), our slips go begging, our employees have to be either laid off or their hours significantly cut, tourist traffic from the water from new boat owners drops off, and in the end it is the State of CT who is the real loser. A sale that goes elsewhere means lost sales tax revenue from the sale itself, lost wages and therefore lost employee taxes on wages earned, and the ripple effect of lost tourism dollars is well know to you and us.

We wholeheartedly support your efforts to make a change in DMV's ways of doing business. We appreciate your work to require DMV to be more efficient. Repealing the "Hard Stop" on processing vessel registration when the purchaser has a prior tax issue with their town would be a huge step forward in not only reducing lines at DMV locations but also significantly helping our Industry to continue our growth after years of declining revenues due to the "recession" we all experienced several years ago. It has been a struggle for all of us, and we appreciate your efforts on our behalf.

Thank you.