

2017 AMERICAN BOATING CONGRESS

TALKING POINTS



Welcome to the 2017 American Boating Congress! You are the industry's most effective advocate. Enclosed are talking points outlining our industry's top legislative priorities to help you make the most of your time on Capitol Hill.

KEY FACTS & FIGURES

- ▶ The recreational boating industry is a thriving backbone of the U.S. economy.
- ▶ **Ensure the economic impact of recreational activities is factored into all decision-making—boating alone contributes \$121.5 billion to our nation's economy.**
- ▶ Boating is an American pastime that brings an estimated 88 million people together on the water each year.
- ▶ The boating industry supports 650,000 U.S. jobs and 35,000 marine businesses.
- ▶ Each year, the U.S. boating industry generates an estimated \$37 billion in sales.
- ▶ Boats are one of the few “American-made” products: 95% of boats sold in the U.S. are made in the U.S.

ISSUES

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

- ▶ Marine manufacturers need a 21st century infrastructure system to easily transport product and consumers across our nation's byways and waterways.
- ▶ **Infrastructure legislation should include waterways, not just roads and bridges!**
The boating industry needs a recreational section added to infrastructure legislation.
- ▶ Invest in “full service” boating facilities that include utilities, parking, fuel stations, ramps and marinas to sustain access to our waterways.
- ▶ Dredge the Intercoastal Waterway—a critical thoroughfare for recreational boaters.
- ▶ Prioritize funding for Everglades restoration.

RECREATIONAL FISHING

- ▶ Recreational anglers provide a significant boost to the U.S. economy: America's 46 million recreational anglers make a combined economic contribution of \$48 billion in retail sales, \$115 billion overall economic impact, and 828,000 jobs.
- ▶ **Support the Modern Fish Act, H.R. 2023**, by co-sponsoring this bipartisan legislation in the House, and introduce similar legislation in the Senate.
- ▶ H.R. 2023 addresses the needs of the recreational fishing industry by increasing fishing access and conservation, modernizing fisheries management, and improving data collection.

TAX POLICY

- ▶ Comprehensive tax reform is essential to the economic power of manufacturing and building boats in the U.S. **We must make sure boating remains an American-made industry.**
- ▶ 95% of the U.S. boating industry are small businesses, mainly structured as S corporations. Small businesses need a simplified tax code and lower rates to be globally competitive.
- ▶ The boating industry needs to know how border adjustability tax impacts U.S. exports and global supply chain.

ACCESS

- ▶ Government policies on federal lands and waters must balance conservation with visitor access—**Americans need access to our public spaces in order to enjoy the outdoors.**
- ▶ Eliminate barriers to public-private partnerships on federal lands and waters.

JOBS

- ▶ There is demand for skilled workers in our industry. Manufacturers, dealers, and repair shops stand ready to hire, but **our current workforce system is not meeting marine workforce demands.**
- ▶ Prioritizing technical, vocational and apprenticeship programs and connecting the marine industry with federal and state programs is the key to job growth and employment in marine manufacturing and retail.

FUEL POLICY

- ▶ **The Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) needs to be reformed to ensure a safe fuel for the boating industry's 12 million products.**
- ▶ The boating industry supports HR 1315, which would reform the RFS and cap the amount of ethanol at 10 percent.
- ▶ The boating industry partnered with the Department of Energy to study the effects of E15 on marine engines—studies show performance issues as well as increased emissions.
- ▶ The EPA needs to better educate boaters on the harmful effects of E15 for marine, small and off-road engine equipment.

BOATING SAFETY

- ▶ As Congress considers the 2017 U.S. Coast Guard Authorization bill, the recreational marine industry urges:
 - mandatory wear of engine cut-off devices for vessels under 26 feet, while on plane—a safety issue for both operators and law enforcement,
 - make it easier to use EPIRBs (Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacon) and PLBs (Personal Locator Beacon) as alternatives to traditional flares,
 - encourage on-water education as a safety priority and reduce barriers for educational instructors.

CONSERVATION

- ▶ Boaters lead the way in waterway conservation, contributing **\$600 million** annually from motor boat fuel and fishing equipment excise taxes that support the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund.
- ▶ Trust Fund dollars support state programs to protect and grow boat ramps, water habitat and fish stocks, and supports Coast Guard efforts for boating safety.
- ▶ The boating industry stands ready to tackle **Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)**, which can shut down entire bodies of water, resulting in a loss of boating access, businesses, and tourism.
- ▶ **Congress can help curb the spread of AIS nationwide by continuing to fund invasive species line items in the Federal Budget.**

TRADE

- ▶ The boating industry supports The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The industry understands there are some reforms needed to NAFTA; however, **the agreement should be renegotiated with the understanding of the key role Canada and Mexico play for U.S. marine manufacturers supply chain and export markets.**
- ▶ The boating industry supports **trade policies** that lower tariffs for recreational boats and marine engines, allow for transparent and uniform customs procedures, and promote synchronization of recreational vessel construction standards.