

November 25, 2014

Chairwoman Boxer, Ranking Member Vitter and Members of the Senate Environmental and Public Works Committee:

On behalf of the following organizations, we would like to express our support of legislation to permanently exempt small commercial and fishing vessels from the requirements to obtain a Clean Water Act (CWA) vessel discharge permit.

As you know, commercial vessels under seventy-nine feet and fishing vessels are currently exempt from obtaining a vessel discharge permit for incidental discharges under the CWA. This exemption has been renewed annually and is currently set to expire in December 2014. In order to continue the intent of Congress to exempt such incidental discharges on small vessels, we the undersigned organizations, support a permanent exemption for discharge permits, for this subset of vessels, as established in Public Law 110-299 (33 U.S.C. 1342).

A permanent exemption would ensure consistency and certainty for small vessel operation. The Clean Boating Act, which was passed in 2008, already provides that no permit shall be required under the CWA for any discharge incidental to the normal operation of a recreational vessel. Legislation currently under consideration by this committee, would not impact the parameters of the Clean Boating Act, but rather simply expand the current exemption for small commercial and fishing vessels.

We encourage the committee and Senate to act swiftly in passing legislation to permanently exempt small commercial and fishing vessels from CWA permits before it is set to expire next month.

Sincerely,

Association of Marina Industries

American Sportfishing Association

B.A.S.S. LLC

BoatUS

Center for Coastal Conservation

Coastal Conservation Association

Congressional Sportsmen Foundation

Marine Retailers Association of the Americas

National Boating Federation

National Marine Manufacturers Association

State Organization for Boating Access