

February 19, 2020

The Honorable John Katko
U.S. House of Representatives
2457 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Anthony Brindisi
U.S. House of Representatives
329 Cannon House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Katko and Brindisi:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we thank you for championing the *Safer Harbors for Our Recreation Economy Act* (SHORE Act, H.R. 5832). By requiring the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to account for outdoor recreation's economic impact in project prioritization, this bipartisan legislation ensures critical water infrastructure projects are funded on an equitable, sustainable, and needs based system.

Led by boating and fishing, outdoor recreation is one of the fastest growing segments of the economy, generating \$778 billion in annual economic output and supporting 5.2 million American jobs. These economic contributions power national and local economies and rely on safe, navigable waterways. By only recognizing commercial activity as the sole threshold for a project's economic benefits, the existing process fails to account for the value created by access for recreation activities, leaving our economy at a disadvantage. Additionally, without sufficient dredging in recreation-based harbors and waterways, some recreational boaters are forced to use high traffic commercial channels, which can lead to potential user conflicts and safety concerns.

Small recreation-based ports are critical access points for marinas and coastal communities where businesses depend on marine recreation-based economic activity. Additionally, given that 84 percent of the U.S. recreational boating industry is made up of small businesses, this commonsense modernization of an antiquated process for prioritizing water infrastructure projects will reenergize main street in coastal and inland waterway communities across the country.

The federal government has a responsibility to maintain all of the nation's ports, harbors, and waterways, yet for too long water infrastructure projects that support recreation access have gone underappreciated and neglected. For the outdoor recreation industry – and the entire U.S. economy – to continue to grow, it is essential that navigation and harbor maintenance projects are sufficiently funded to create jobs in coastal and inland waterway communities, improve access for water-based recreational activities, and make conditions safer for the recreational boating and angling communities.

We fully support your initiative to expand and improve marine recreation access through the SHORE Act and stand ready to assist you in securing this significant investment in our nation's local economies.

Sincerely,

America's Great Loop Cruisers Association

American Sportfishing Association

Association of Marina Industries

Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway Association
Boating Association of Ohio
Boat Owner's Association of the United States
Connecticut Marine Trades Association
Greater Cleveland Boating Association
Great Lakes Small Harbors Coalition
Lake Erie Marine Trades
Lake of the Ozarks Marine Dealers
Marine Retailers Association of the Americas
Marine Trades Association of Maryland
Massachusetts Marine Trade Association
Metro Marine Dealers of Minnesota
Michigan Boating Industries Association
National Association of Counties
National Boating Federation
National Marine Lenders Associations
National Marine Manufacturers Association
Northwest Marine Trades Association
Onekama Harbor Commission
Outdoor Recreation Roundtable
Recreational Boating Industries Educational Foundation
Rhode Island Marine Trade Association
Seven Seas Cruising Association
Southwest Florida Marine Industries Association
Wisconsin Marine Association