



March 25, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair
Maryland General Assembly
Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Cheryl C. Kagan
Vice Chair
Maryland General Assembly
Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Written Testimony: HB0719 – Support and Pass

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment:

The undersigned organizations, which represent the entirety of our nation’s recreational boating industry, write today to express our support for the provisions put forth in HB0719 and urge that the committee vote favorably. This legislation stands to make common-sense updates to Maryland’s recreational boating laws while simultaneously availing more resources for much-needed recreational boating access throughout the state.

The Marine Retailers Association of the Americas (MRAA) is the leading trade association of North American small businesses that sell and service new and pre-owned recreational boats and operate marinas, boatyards, and accessory stores. MRAA represents more than 1,300 individual member retail locations and conducts advocacy efforts on their behalf, including 20 members located in Maryland.

The National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) is the premier trade association for the U.S. recreational boating industry, representing nearly 1,300 marine businesses, including recreational boat, marine engine, and accessory manufacturers. NMMA members collectively manufacture more than 85 percent of the marine products sold in the U.S. Furthermore, the recreational boating industry has a \$230 billion impact on the nation’s economy and in

communities across the country, with 812,000 American jobs across 36,000 U.S.-based marine businesses. Approximately 93% of U.S. boat builders are small businesses.

The Association of Marina Industries (AMI) is a North American trade association dedicated to the marina and boatyard industry. We have over 1300 members throughout the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean—over 1 million boaters in the U.S. access water through our member marinas.

Maryland is home to the Chesapeake Bay, 3,190 miles of coastline, more than 100 lakes, and over 16,000 miles of freshwater streams. Simply put, recreational boating and fishing are part of the Old Line State's history and heritage. It is also a major economic contributor throughout the state, generating \$4.2 billion in annual economic impact. Furthermore, a strong recreational boating culture fuels a workforce of more than 16,000 people at over 1,000 businesses. It is safe to say that in Maryland, boating means business.

HB0719 proposes much-needed updates to Maryland's recreational boating laws, ensuring that fee structures reflect modern economic realities, including inflation and the evolving financial landscape. The undersigned organizations and our members support the bill's proposed fee adjustments, as the current fee structure has remained unchanged since 1983. These updates are necessary to respond to today's fiscal conditions and sustain Maryland's vital recreational boating infrastructure.

Additionally, we commend the proposed improvements to the Waterway Improvement Fund, which will provide up to \$1 million for projects benefiting the general boating public. Enhanced access to Maryland's fresh and saltwater resources will create new opportunities for recreational boaters and strengthen the state's boating economy, where access remains a key limiting factor.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to vote in favor of HB0719. The proposed changes will positively impact Maryland's economy, residents, and visitors by expanding boating access, enhancing boater safety, and ensuring that the Maryland Department of Natural Resources has the necessary resources to fulfill its mission.

We appreciate your time and consideration of this important legislation. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

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