



Marine Retailers Association of the Americas

8401 73rd Ave. N Suite 71, Minneapolis, MN 55428

Phone: 763-315-8043

March 11, 2020

The Honorable Delores G. Kelley, Chairman
Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SB 723 - Consumer Protection – Right to Repair - Oppose

On behalf of the Marine Retailers Association of the Americas (MRAA), I would like to thank you for the opportunity to express our opposition for SB 723 as written.

The Marine Retailers Association of the Americas 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.

Recreational boating is not only a major pastime in Maryland, but it is also a significant economic driver, providing nearly 18,000 jobs between over 1000 businesses, and contributing **\$3.5 billion** to the state economy.

While we do not question the good intent of this legislation, we have concerns about how the broad language of this bill would affect our industry. If passed as written, “Right to Repair” would pose serious threats to the marine industry, and the consumers that enjoy our products. Proponents of the so-called “Right to Repair” legislation want access to software, and specialized tools, and demand access to mechanical, electrical, safety, and emissions features that are incorporated into marine engine and marine electronic products. Granting consumers access to such information could result in modifications to the engine that would make them no-longer compliant with federal emissions and safety requirements.

We do not oppose a consumer’s right to make repairs on their equipment, and in fact many of our members will work with their customers to sell the required parts and train them to do simple repairs themselves. We do however, oppose providing access to the complex inner code of the products our members sell due to concerns of safety, emissions, compliance, and product reliability. Providing this level of access to untrained individuals would negatively affect the products’ compliance with federal safety, security, and emission standards. Motor engines can become a dangerous liability if modified incorrectly, and ultimately could potentially cause irreparable engine malfunction at sea, leaving users struggling to make it back to safe port, and put users and their families at risk of bodily harm.

Equipment manufacturers and dealerships have invested millions of dollars in educating and training their technicians, and obtaining certifications that qualify them to properly service their products. Manufacturers put their confidence in certified dealers and technicians to be able to maintain a given engine through its lifetime. With “Right to Repair” legislation, dealers, manufacturers and consumers lose confidence in this system because it negatively impacts, longevity, emissions, and safety for today’s boaters.

For these reasons, MRAA opposes SB 723 and respectfully asks you to protect the boating industry in Maryland by voting against its approval in committee. Please contact me at adam@mraa.com if you should have any questions.

Sincerely,

Adam Fortier-Brown



Government Relations Manager

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