

Margaret Podlich
1011 Bay Ridge Avenue, #230
Annapolis MD 21403

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Delegate Kumar Barve, Chair
Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

I am writing to support HB478, a bill to study a Waterway Incident Notification System (WINS) Workgroup, with amendments. I understand and support the need for this issue to be studied so that a method of notification can be established that will provide local citizens who have opted-in, on land or on the water, vital emergency notifications without regard to county or jurisdiction lines.

I've been an active boater on the Chesapeake for more than 30 years, and most of my career has been within the boating industry, including representing boaters nationwide on federal and state policy development at BoatU.S. As such I believe that coordination and dissemination of data is vital to keeping our waters safe for the people who live and work along the shores, or who work and recreate on the water. The concept of pushing emergency data out through phone text messages to local citizens who have opted-in, on land or on the water, without regard to county or jurisdiction lines, is strong, and it is worth studying.

The current proposed Workgroup consists solely of state or county employees. (I understand there may be an Amendment offered during Committee that would address this.) In order to get the user perspective and buy-in from the start, I'd strongly suggest adding committee members who are from the boating industry and/or who represent boaters. US Coast Guard District 5 personnel from Baltimore should also be included, since they have significant jurisdiction and responsibilities in local waters. Both groups would be more attuned to any existing marine-related Apps that should be included within this study.

Section 1(f)(1) may be written too narrowly describing the potential notification "of active waterway emergencies involving a person at risk of death or serious bodily harm, emergency marine events, or marine hazards." Does this include a pop-up thunderstorm or unpredicted weather event? Does "active" preclude the announcement of a Conowingo dam opening tomorrow, flooding the Upper Bay with tons of debris?

I appreciate your guardianship of smart and safe boating on the Bay, and the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Margaret Podlich