

3/2/2025

Dear Committee Members,

As a resident of Stevensville, MD, who resides on Thompson Creek Landing, I am asking you to support passage of HB 1260 currently being considered in the 2025 Maryland General Assembly. This bill offers protection from irresponsible boat owners who have casually tied their recreational boats to the non-permitted pilings in Thompson Creek and all waterways of the State. In most cases these vessels have been left to the elements and time which have consequently sunk or broken away. Resulting in environmental or property damage to surrounding property owners. Below I have provided two pictures of boats that show this type of damage. The first picture of the green boat, broke free during a storm ending up on a neighbor pier. Unfortunately, piers are uninsurable. So, this neighbor incurred thousands of dollars' worth out of pocket expenses to repair their pier. The second picture shows the environmental impact these types of boats can have on the Chesapeake Bay. This gas or oil sheen went unattended for days. I have numerous other pictures of boats that have either broken free or have sunk on Thompson Creek. I would be happy to share them with the committee at a time in the future. Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend this Tuesday's meeting due to an out-of-town business obligation, otherwise I would be testifying in person.

The waterways of the State of Maryland are the wild West for boat owners who want to get rid of boats they no longer have interest in maintaining. It is crazy that a person can discard their boat, that lacks current registration and tie it to a pilings or mooring buoys, that have been placed in Maryland waters illegally. I am not sure why the State looks the other way, at these unpermitted piles and buoys that invite irresponsible boat owners to tie to. Unfortunately, there are no laws in our state to prevent either situation. Waterways around the State have become junk yards to irresponsible boat owners. Not only do these boats put a financial burden on the residents who incur damage they also put a financial burden on the State. When these boats sink and the State has to refloat and remove them. There is a substantial cost to the State. HB 1260 is a proactive bill that will address these situations. It will also help place the responsibility of boat ownership back on the owner, thus protecting property owners and the environment.

Thank you,

Dean Groff

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