

Thank you to the Chair and Committee for this opportunity to offer support and seek your favorable recommendation for House Bill 1260. I’ve also submitted this testimony electronically.

My name is James Wood. I work for Queen Anne’s County. My title is Public Landings Supervisor.

Public landings are the interface point between public county land and the “waters of the state”.

We believe:

- HB 1260 will help deter and address an ongoing problem of abandoned recreational boats.
- HB 1260 will enhance the existing successful abandoned boat law, Natural Resources Article 8-721, a law that we’re very glad already exists in MD.
 - Other states aren’t so lucky to have a way to address the “conveyer belt” of old recreational boats.
- HB 1260 will do this by expanding and clarifying the existing abandoned boat law to include boats that are moored and anchored in state waters.
 - **Boats tied to moorings will have to have permission of the owner** or person in control **of the mooring “apparatus”**, including mooring poles and anchors.
 - Existing law addresses boats abandoned at marinas, public and private property, and boats that may be adrift or unattended in state waters.
 - **HB 1260 will clearly add boats abandoned on mooring apparatus** and anchors.
- HB1260 will also expand and clarify the criteria, used to determine IF a boat IS abandoned. Think of this as helping to enhance the “checklist” a Natural Resource Police officer might use to decide if a boat is abandoned. The new criteria include whether:
 - The boat has a current registration;
 - Signs that water is being regularly removed from the boat;
 - The condition of the boat;
 - The condition of the lines (ropes) or chain used to secure the boat to a mooring.
 - If the boat is anchored, whether the boat has an anchor light.
- We recognize and appreciate that the existing law already addresses potential navigation, health or environmental hazards. We believe HB1260 will provide a means to be proactive before abandoned boats cause these hazardous conditions.

Again, **HB1260 will require boat owners to obtain permission to use moorings AND** to take reasonable measures to maintain the boat such as keeping the bilge pumped out, tying it securely with suitable ropes, and having a current registration.

We appreciate Delegate Arentz’s, and his staff’s, assistance to introduce HB1260 and Bill sponsors Delegates Ghrist and Jacobs for their support.

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If time allows, I can share some background as to how things have changed in our creeks ... and how our request for this legislation came about.

Working with some local concerned citizens, county staff and officials have been coordinating to seek ways to deter potential abandoned boats and related impacts and suggest these enhancements to the existing abandoned boat law.

The concern is the ongoing occurrences of old recreational boats, in poor condition, being moored in the creeks indefinitely and unattended ... essentially, boats are tied to mooring poles or anchored as a way to discard the boat.

Older boats are often given away or sold at a low price to individuals who may not have the means to maintain them or a location to store them, on the water, such as at a marina.

At some point they become abandoned, may sink, or break loose, potentially causing hazards to health, environment, and property.

Traditionally watermen may temporarily moor their boats in various creeks in locations where the crabs / fish / oysters may be “running good”.

Watermen will have mooring poles to moor their boats for these seasonal needs and also for safe harbor during storms.

This type of temporary mooring has a long tradition and purpose that is consistent with the lifestyle and livelihood of Queen Anne’s County and are not a concern.

**Using moorings as a means to abandon recreational boats IS a concern.**

Thank you for your time and consideration. We encourage a favorable recommendation of HB1260.

Respectfully submitted by,

James Wood

Queen Anne’s County Public Landings Supervisor

Queen Anne's County Parks and Recreation Department  
Public Landings Division  
1945 4-H Park Rd.  
Centreville, Maryland 21617  
[jwood@qac.org](mailto:jwood@qac.org) 410-758-0835x2505