

Save Cal Boating

Budget Conference Committee

May 26, 2009

Adventure Outings and the Forebay Aquatic Center
America True
American Watercraft Association
Bay Area Association of Disabled Sailors
BoatUS
California Association of Harbor Masters and Port Captains
California Marine Parks and Harbors Association
California Yacht Brokers Association
Farallones Marine Sanctuary Association
Kawasaki Motors Corp., USA
Marina Recreation Association
National Marine Manufacturers Association
Northern California Marine Association
Pacific Inter-Club Yacht Association
Personal Watercraft Industry Association
Recreational Boaters of California
Southern California Marine Association
Southern California Yachting Association
Western Boaters Safety Group

Dear Members of the Budget Conference Committee:

Assemblymember Noreen Evans, chair	Senator Denise Ducheny
Assemblymember Kevin de León	Senator Bob Dutton
Assemblymember Bob Blumenfield	Senator Mark Leno
Assemblymember Bob Roger Niello	Senator Alan Lowenthal
Assemblymember Jim Nielsen	Senator Mimi Walters

The organizations listed above urge you to vote against the proposal to eliminate the independent Department of Boating and Waterways [Cal Boating].

The Governor's May Budget Revision proposes to eliminate Cal Boating to save \$600,000 per year. The plan would transfer Cal Boating's responsibilities and administration of the Harbors and Watercraft Revolving Fund to the Department of Parks and Recreation [State Parks]. This proposal is the same as the Governor's earlier *Roadmap for More Efficient Government*.

Elimination of Cal Boating would not save the General Fund a single dollar and would not help with the state budget crisis. Cal Boating receives no General Fund dollars. It is funded by boater fuel tax dollars, registration fees, and interest payments on infrastructure loans.

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This state's more than 3 million boating enthusiasts, who support a \$17 billion per year boating industry, must have a department with a Director whose primary focus is boating:

Cal Boating Saves Lives. The number of fatalities has decreased significantly during Cal Boating's existence the past 52 years, through enhanced boating safety laws, an extensive and pervasive education program, and increasing subventions to local law enforcement.

Cal Boating receives no General Fund Dollars and its elimination will not save general fund dollars. The department is funded by boater fuel tax dollars, registration fees, and interest payments on infrastructure loans.

Cal Boating provides Accountability, Transparency and Leadership regarding the collection and use of boater-derived taxes and fees, and the best use of these funds for programs that benefit boating. The department carefully allocates boater revenues for state-wide boating law enforcement, safety, sanitation and other services in conjunction with a public and transparent process of the Boating and Waterways Commission.

Cal Boating's Elimination would Negatively Impact a Minimum of \$72 Million Annually in vital boating-related programs and services. The department has a compact organizational structure and administers boating programs in a timely and non-bureaucratic manner. Its statutory charter is directly boating-related.

Cal Boating Services all Facets of the Boating Community. Cal Boating licenses Yacht and Ship Brokers. This regulatory authority ensures the protection of consumers involved in such major purchases. This is just another example of the comprehensive nature of the services to the boating community Cal Boating provides. It is because of such services that boating is a major economic engine of this state, including adding \$1.2 billion to Gross State Product and employing over 11,000 in 1,600 direct boating businesses.

Cal Boating Promotes Environmentally Responsible Boat Ownership through its Dockwalkers outreach program with recreational boaters to promote green practices, especially regarding oil/diesel spill prevention, and discharge where prohibited. Cal Boating promotes programs to teach, endorse, and educate about environmentally responsible boat ownership and operation.

Cal Boating is a Near-perfect Example of Government Efficiency. The department is often praised for being knowledgeable about its programs, responsive to its clients, stakeholders, and customers; and for ongoing oversight and transparency regarding the use of boaters' dollars which support the Harbors and Watercraft Revolving Fund.

Cal Boating is Nationally Recognized for its High-quality Work in many areas, including its expertise in boating safety and education, and innovation in the design of boating facilities, to name just a few.

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The elimination of Cal Boating has been reviewed several times and each time it has been rejected. It was first proposed in 1992 and again in 1996 by Governor Wilson. In 2003 there was a legislative effort to eliminate Cal Boating as well. Clearly, this concept has been carefully considered and rejected each time.

While we understand the importance of finding savings during these difficult times, we believe eliminating Cal Boating would not solve any fiscal problems, and would jeopardize essential programs and services including:

- **Public Safety** - providing financial aid and training to local law enforcement agencies.
- **Infrastructure jobs** - docks, ramps, and marinas through a fund that pays itself back with interest.
- **Consumer protection** - licensing and regulating yacht and ship brokers and salespersons.
- **Education** - through aquatic centers, as well as boating safety curriculum, videos, events and campaigns.
- **Environmental Protection** - efforts to combat non-native, invasive species of aquatic plants and mollusks.

Recreational boating contributes approximately \$16.5 billion to the gross state product, which represents about 1.2 percent of the State's economy and generates about \$1.6 billion in state and local taxes. There are more than 8,500 recreational boating-related businesses. Recreational boating also creates over 284,000 direct and indirect jobs. (Source: DBW Boating Needs Assessment Study, 2002)

In conclusion, the State's more than 3 million boaters, that support a \$16.5 billion per year boating industry, must have a department with a Director whose primary focus is boating.

We respectfully urge you to vote "No" on the proposal to eliminate Cal Boating.

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