



February 13th, 2023

The Honorable Faith Winter
Chair
Senate Committee on Transportation and Energy
200 E Colfax
Denver, CO 80203

The Honorable Kevin Priola
Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Transportation and Energy
200 E Colfax
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Chair Winter, Vice Chair Priola and Members of the Senate Committee on Transportation and Energy:

The undersigned organizations write today to express our support for SB 69 *Requirements to Operate a Motorboat* and urge the committee to vote favorable on both amendments put forth today. The undersigned organizations represent the full breadth of the recreational boating industry nationally and locally and appreciate the leadership of Senator Hinrichsen and Senator Will to make boating in Colorado safer for all.

The Marine Retailers Association of the Americas (MRAA) 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.

The National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) is the trade association for the U.S. recreational boating industry, representing nearly 1,300 marine businesses, including recreational boat, marine engine, and accessory manufacturers. Our members are often U.S.-based small businesses, many of which are family owned. NMMA members collectively manufacture more than 85 percent of the marine products sold in the U.S. Furthermore, the recreational boating industry has a \$170 billion impact on the nation's economy and in communities across the country, with nearly 700,000 American jobs across 35,000 U.S.-based marine businesses.

By way of background, the Water Sports Industry Association (WSIA) is the towed watersports industry's leading advocate. The WSIA develops best practices, maintains waterway access rights, educates participants, and promotes safety on the water, including when participating in towed watersports.

Due to Colorado's natural features, crisscrossed by streams and rivers and dotted by a multitude of lakes, ponds, and reservoirs, boating in Colorado is both diverse and varied. Not only is boating in the Centennial State a favorite pastime of many residents and visitors it is also a significant economic contributor to Colorado's growing outdoor recreation economy. According to the United States Bureau of Economic Analysis Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, recreational boating and fishing in Colorado generated \$ 403,046,000.00 in 2021 alone. Furthermore, according to data from NMMA, boating in Colorado supports almost 4,500 jobs at 275 businesses throughout the state.

The undersigned organizations support SB 69 and urge the committee to adopt amendments L.001 and L.002 as these with the changes will not only best protect Colorado's boating public, but also align Colorado with proven boater education statutes in other States. For clarity, provided below is an explanation of the changes the undersigned organizations wish to see made to SB 69, reflected in the amendments put forth today:

- Minimum Age – 14
 - o The undersigned organizations wish to see that the minimum age is changed from 15 to 14.
- Reciprocity
 - o The undersigned organizations want to highlight the importance for Colorado's mandatory boater education requirement to provide reciprocity to out-of-state boaters who completed a NASBLA approved course in their home state, as well as allowing licensed Colorado residents to boat safely, and legally, while they travel.
- Rental Exam – Minimal Onus on Livery/Renter
 - o The undersigned organizations believe that visitors to Colorado who wish to rent vessels for use are able to take a truncated version of the Colorado mandatory boater education test that is available online. The undersigned organizations support this approach as it hosts all necessary materials online and puts no added onus on the renter/livery.
- Effective Date
 - o The undersigned organizations wish to see the effective date of the legislation changed from June 1st 2024, to January 1st 2025 – this is done in hopes of providing more time to prepare for implementation and to avoid putting in place this new regulation during the boating season.
- Safety Clause
 - o Lastly, the undersigned organizations wish to see the safety clause changed to a petition clause.

Again, the undersigned organizations thank the Committee and Senator Hinrichsen and Senator Will for their leadership on this matter and focus on improving the safety of Colorado's waterways for both residents and visitors alike. Please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns to Chad Tokowicz, at Chad@mraa.com or 978-569-5127.

Sincerely,

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