Boating Associations of Ohio

Chairwoman Manning, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Member Cafaro, and members of the Senate Transportation, Commerce and Labor Committee, my name is Ken Alvey and I am Executive Director of the Boating Associations of Ohio (BAO), representing Ohio's boat dealers, marina operators and affiliated groups of more than 20,000 Ohio boat owners.

The purpose of this letter is to state BAO's opposition to the elimination of the requirement for a spotter in a watercraft while any activity is performed behind the boat included in the House version of HB 53, the Transportation Budget. The Boating Associations of Ohio believes the elimination of this requirement is unsafe and could result in unintended accidents. BAO would like to see current law retained, and the proposed change to section 1547.15 removed.

Any activity behind a watercraft (skiing, tubing) should be a team sport. The team players are the skier, the boat driver and an observer to keep a proper lookout. He/she should keep an eye on the skier and relay messages to the driver.

In addition to relaying the skier's and operator's signals, the observer is responsible for watching the skier at all times. Having an observer on board the watercraft allows the driver to give full attention to the variety of tasks necessary for safe motorboat operation. If a spotter were eliminated, it would be near impossible for a driver to focus on the tasks of safe driving while giving the skier full attention. Divided attention of a driver could lead to increased accidents on Ohio's waterways.

The Boating Associations of Ohio would like to keep boating and the sports that are performed while boating as safe as possible. Eliminating the current spotter requirement would not promote safe boating methods. Thank you, Chair Manning and members of the Committee for consideration of this prospective.

1269 Bassett Road
Westlake, Ohio 44145
440/899-5009
FAX: 440/899-5013