



Marine Retailers Association of the Americas

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Ohio House Ways and Means Committee
Written Testimony in Support – Ohio House Bill 419
February 17, 2020

Dear Chairman Merrin:

On behalf of the Marine Retailers Association of the Americas (MRAA), I would like to thank you for the opportunity to show our support for H.B. 419, which would create a more friendly environment for out-of-state recreational boaters, and support Ohio marine businesses during their off season.

The Marine Retailers Association of the Americas 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.

Recreational boating is not only a major pastime in the state of Ohio, but it is also a significant economic driver, providing more than 16,000 jobs between nearly 850 businesses, and contributing **\$3.4 billion** to the state economy. Unfortunately, the current tax environment in Ohio acts as a deterrent to many out-of-state customers who would otherwise choose to have their boats stored and repaired in your state.

Current law requires the Ohio Department of Taxation to collect additional taxes from out-of-state consumers offering their business to the high skilled marine workforce. In some cases, this can leave consumers with bills in the tens of thousands of dollars. This drives business away from the small businesses on Lake Erie and across Ohio that depend on off-season repairs to stay open. H.B. 419 would remove an unnecessary hindrance on local businesses, and keep high-skilled workers in their jobs year-round,

There is a lot of labor that goes into winterizing a boat at the end of a season. Marinas and boat dealerships will lift, clean, and winterize the boat before storing it. They will conduct repairs, repaint the hulls, service or rebuild marine engines, replace and service electronics, and all other parts of a consumer's boat. It is a work-intensive process that supports thousands of high-skilled workers and their families throughout the year.

For these reasons, the MRAA supports H.B. 419, and respectfully asks this committee to support the recreational boating industry in Ohio by voting for its approval in committee. Please contact me at adam@mraa.com should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Adam Fortier-Brown
Government Relations Manager