

Chairman Manning, Vice Chair Brenner, and Ranking Member Maharath, and members of the Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs committee, my name is Steve Arndt and I thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of House Bill 211 which would make the process of getting a boat title in the state of Ohio easier.

In my part of the state, the Western Lake Erie basin has the 3rd highest concentrations of watercraft in the nation. As a state, Ohio has the 9th highest registry of watercraft in the United States. We are blessed that many journey to our waterways throughout Ohio to live, work, and play, especially in the summer.

However with that comes some challenges that our local communities and business struggle with. That struggle is abandoned boats, when the cost of repairs exceed the value of the boat, many owners choose to simply walk away. This problem is not unique to Ohio, many other states, especially in the Great Lakes region and southern states, have struggled to address this issue. In my area many of these boats are owned by non-residents who come to Ohio to enjoy their boating experience in our region and the amount of boats that become abandoned in local marinas really add up over time.

Current Ohio Revised Code provides a process for marina owners to gain title so they can remove boats that have been abandoned in their marina. However, it is an extremely onerous process for local marina owners that can take over 6 months, this involves expensive legal fees with no guarantee of success or that they will be reimbursed for any of these costs. These challenges are so prohibitive that many marina owners are forced to keep these boats on their properties taking up valuable space with no compensation for many years, and the communities are forced to watch these watercraft continue to deteriorate creating an eyesore with little recourse.

H.B. 211 would provide an easier process for marina owners. With this legislation, a marina owner can claim the title of a "vessel or outboard motor" if

- 1) The watercraft has been left unclaimed on the person's property for 20 days or more & the owner does not have a valid storage or repair contract with the owner or lien-holder of the vessel
- 2) The marina owner sends notice by certified mail with the location of the boat, to the address of the last known owner of the vessel or lien-holder.
- 3) The certified mail returns with either a signed receipt or was notified that the delivery of the certified mail was not possible.
- 4) The vessel/outboard motor continues to remain unclaimed for more than 10 days after the required notice was signed by the owner or lien holder or the day that the marina owner was notified that delivery was not possible.
- 5) The marina owner executes an affidavit confirming that the all of the preceding requirements are fulfilled.

Chairman Manning, Vice Chair Brenner, and Ranking Member Maharath, and members of the Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs committee thank you again for the opportunity to testify on this legislation.

I am happy to answer any questions the committee may have.