



Chairman Kick, Vice Chair Lear, Ranking Member Rogers and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit supportive testimony regarding an amendment up for consideration to Senate Bill 156. This amendment would incorporate Senate Bill 7 into SB 156.

Founded in 1957 under the name the Lake Erie Marine Trades Association, the Ohio Marine Trades Association (OMTA) welcome boat dealers, marina operators, watercraft manufacturers, clubs, financial entities, other water-based organizations and the individual recreational boaters throughout the entire State of Ohio. The amendment we are supporting would do 2 important things.

Increase Boater Safety Education Grant maximum awards. Currently, Ohio law limits the amount that can be awarded through the Ohio boater safety education grant program to \$30,000. The amendment would increase the maximum amount to \$60,000. The amendment does not increase the appropriation for the program, only the amount any one grantee can be awarded. The grants are funded through the waterway safety fund, which is a user pay, user benefit program that is funded through boat registrations, a portion of the gas tax and federal funding. Applicants must also match at least 25% of the grant amount. Grants can be used to fund boater safety education courses, skill development for non-traditional boating groups and other purposes. Previous awardees include YMCAs, 4-H groups and Metroparks.

We have seen many new Ohioans become boating enthusiasts. During the pandemic, many turned to outdoor recreation and boating was a great choice for many families. It is critically important that these new boaters are safe on the water and use of the grants is a key piece of that effort. They also allow boating to be introduced to a new generation. Increasing the maximum amount of these grants can expand that reach in further. It is important to note, awards are still granted for amounts less than the maximum and the amendment does not change that.

Designates April as Powerboat Safety Month, with a focus on carbon monoxide. Many might not expect that carbon monoxide poisoning on the water is a very real threat. This can happen in the cabin of boats or by swimming too close to a running engine. After a tragic incident that effected one of our members, OMTA, in partnership with ODNR, created a video educating on the dangers of CO2 while boating. That video can be watched here: <https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/safety-conservation/about-ODNR/division-parks-watercraft/boating-paddling-Ohio>

Thank you for the committee's consideration of the amendment and to Senator Schuring for introducing the original legislation.