

Recreational Boating Association of Washington (RBAW)

2018 Legislative & Regulatory Priorities

NOTE: This list of 2018 legislative and regulatory priorities is not meant as a be-all/end-all list for RBAW. As other legislative and regulatory matters arise leading up to and during the 2018 Session, RBAW may consider those for a formal position and follow-up action.

Legislative Priorities

Enact 2017-19 Capital Budget & Retain Funding Allocations for Recreational Boating and Outdoor Recreation Grant Programs: RBAW joins stakeholders throughout the state in urging the Legislature to enact a \$4.2 billion, 2017-19 Capital Budget early in the 2018 Session if not before. RBAW will also want to ensure that the budget retains allocations for the Boating Facilities Program (\$17.165 million), Clean Vessel Pump-Out Grants (\$2.6 million in federal pass-through funds) and Boating Infrastructure Grants (\$2.2 million in federal pass-through funds). RBAW also strongly supports the \$80 million allocation for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP), including water-access funds.

Support legislative efforts to re-establish a tourism marketing program at the state level with strong focus on outdoor recreation investments: The Legislature approved a \$500,000 appropriation in its 2017-19 Operating Budget to develop a tourism marketing plan for Washington. RBAW is interested in supporting a statewide tourism marketing program that highlights the benefits of recreational boating and can bring more recreational boating visitors and spending into Washington. *While RBAW will strongly support tourism marketing legislation, it will seek to ensure that tourism marketing investments put a focus on the \$4 billion-a-year recreational boating sector and on an outdoor recreation sector that generates over \$22 billion a year in revenue to the state and employs 200,000+ people.*

Oppose pending legislation to exempt the Des Moines and Oak Harbor municipal marinas from state “Aquatic Land Lease” rent payments: *RBAW, joined by the Northwest Marine Trade Alliance (NMTA) and state agencies such as the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Recreation & Conservation Office (RCO), will continue to express significant concerns with this legislation, introduced in 2017 as **HB 1801/SB 5504**. Exempting the municipally-run marinas in Des Moines and Oak Harbor is inherently unfair to other marinas throughout the state, including those operated by community boating and yacht clubs. Additionally, there are other municipally-run marinas which aren’t seeking exemptions. RBAW opposes any legislation giving preferential treatment to some marinas at the expense of others.*

Big Tent Outdoor Recreation Coalition – Establishment of Outdoor Recreation Caucus: RBAW is a “Big Tent” member and strongly supports its efforts to raise the profile of the outdoor recreation sector. The Big Tent helped establish a new “Outdoor Recreation Caucus” of up to 12 state legislators who will meet regularly to discuss outdoor recreation issues. *RBAW strongly supports this new Caucus.*

‘Road Usage Charge’ Study & Pilot Efforts – Ensure There is an Awareness of, and Plan for, Impacts to Non-Highway Tax Funding Set-Asides: RBAW is tracking the work of a legislatively-directed “Road Usage Charge” Task Force and an initial ‘RUC’ pilot scheduled to begin in 2018. RBAW will work to educate key legislators on the implications of ultimately ramping the state’s fuel tax down and out in favor of a Road Usage Charge that is miles-driven-based. If and when that happens, there must be statutory action to preserve funding for the Boating Facilities Program, which currently receives its monies from non-highway fuel purchases by boaters which – if not claimed for refund – go into the State Treasury and ultimately to the BFP.

Regulatory Priorities

No Discharge Zone (NDZ) Proposal by the Department of Ecology (DOE): *RBAW and other members of the “Marine Alliance” continue to strongly oppose the establishment of an NDZ that would cover the entirety of the Puget Sound basin. The Marine Alliance has repeatedly proposed the idea of targeted NDZ zones similar to approaches used in California and the Chesapeake Bay area, but to no avail. RBAW is part of a legal challenge to the NDZ and will also push to ensure that if an NDZ is ultimately established, it include a five-year phase-in for recreational boaters just as it does for commercial vessels.*

Washington State Labor & Industries’ Adoption of a National Electric Code (NEC) Standard to Apply to Ground-Fault Leakage at Marina Docks: RBAW is supporting the lead efforts of NMTA to ensure that an L&I adoption of the 2017 NEC standards results in an achievable outcome for marina operators while still providing electric shock drowning protections. This is particularly important to those Yacht Clubs and marinas that will need to upgrade dock wiring in concert with renovations. *RBAW joins NMTA in urging that a 100 milli-amp (mA) ground-fault leakage standard (not 30 mA as in the newest 2017 federal codes) be designated by L&I for all statewide electrical inspectors.* Work with L&I officials on a proposed state rule for the NEC Sec. 555.3 standards is ongoing, and NMTA/RBAW successfully achieved a one-year delay of any new features of the NEC until June 2018.

Aquatic Lands Lease Process with Department of Natural Resources (DNR): RBAW will continue to be a strong advocate of its Yacht Clubs and boating clubs that operate marinas on DNR aquatic lands and are subject to the agency’s leasing and lease-renewal requirements. As a way of bird-dogging the DNR aquatic lands lease process, RBAW and NMTA conduct regular quarterly meetings with DNR officials. *At the present time, RBAW and NMTA are attempting to schedule a meeting of statewide marina operators and DNR land managers, and to perform a joint survey of marina operators to better understand the scope and magnitude of concerns with the leasing process.*