

May 2021

To: The Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

RE: **LD 1663**– An Act to Improve Boating Safety on Maine Waters

Senator Dill, Representative Landry, and members of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, my name is Stacey Keefer, I am presenting this testimony in my capacity as the Director for the Maine Marine Trades Association (MMTA) in support of LD 1663. MMTA represents over 120 Maine businesses and an industry comprised of boatyards, boat builders, marinas, boat dealers, marine retailers, and other service providers.

National Safe Boating Week is May 22-28 this year and supporting LD 1663 is a great way to remind everyone that safe boating should be on our minds every time we get on board boats of all types. If the State can create an affordable program, we are generally in favor of a boating safety certificate program for boat operators. There are some specifics to consider:

- MMTA urges the need for recognition of other safe boating certificates and licenses from entities such as the Coast Guard Auxiliary or similar NASBLA programs in other states.
- MMTA urges conversations with the fishing industry regarding youth operators. Many fishing families and island residents get their children involved in boating before they are 16. A commercial fishing license can be held at age 16.
- Perhaps to accommodate commercial fishing families the final rule should consider if the horsepower cutoff should be 25hp instead of 10hp. New Hampshire is using the 25 hp limit in their program.

Lastly, we would like to add that having a certification program could also be quite helpful in promoting responsible boating –not just safe boating. MMTA would encourage a program that also educates about topics such as aquatic invasive species prevention, use of waste pumpout services to keep water clean, and appropriate wake setbacks to protect shorelines and wildlife. MMTA would be happy to collaborate with IFW and DMR to develop and promote a boating safety certificate program.

Respectfully,
Stacey Keefer
Maine Marine Trades Association, Executive Director