



Industry growth through Collaboration, Communication and Education

November 28, 2017

Chairwomen Gobi
Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources & Agriculture
State House Room 513
Boston, MA 02133

Chairman Pignatelli
Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources & Agriculture
State House Room 146
Boston, MA 02133

Re: Massachusetts Marine Trades Association Comment Letter to Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture

Dear Chairwoman Gobi, Chairman Pignatelli, and Joint Committee Members:

On behalf of the Massachusetts Marine Trades Association (“MMTA”), thank you for the opportunity to comment on several bills in front of the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture at the public hearing on November 29, 2017.

Established in 1964, MMTA is the statewide, non-profit, representative body for over 1,200 marine trades businesses in the Commonwealth. Our businesses employ approximately 12,000 men and women and generate over \$2.0 billion in direct and indirect annual economic activity for Massachusetts inland and on the coast. MMTA’s priorities include improving workforce training for the marine trades, enhancing public access to the waterways, stemming the loss of revenues to neighboring states with more favorable boating tax policies, relieving the dredging and permitting timelines and expenses, as well as providing greater boating opportunities for the public.

The recreational boating industry contributes positively and significantly to the economic strength and quality of life enjoyed in Massachusetts. The ‘business of boating’ provides jobs, economic opportunity, public access to our precious waterways, improves aesthetics of inland and coastal waters and supports environmental stewardship while promoting a family-friendly form of recreation and tourism. A highly reputable study done by Dr. Edward Mahoney from the Michigan State University, about Massachusetts in particular, concluded that for every one dollar spent on a slip or mooring, vessel owners spent four dollars in local businesses.

MMTA offers the following comments on several bills that have an impact on MMTA's members and the business of boating in the Commonwealth:

- **SB 487, An Act providing for alternative DPA compliance:** MMTA supports this bill that would create a special waterfront development oversight commission, which will comment on and approve of development within a designated port area that would not otherwise meet designated port area requirements. Developing criteria for applicants to comply with alternative standards for building non-marine-industrial uses within a designated port area is beneficial to the business of boating, because it could allow for more marinas and boatyards to develop within a designated port area. Currently recreational boating facilities with up to nine slip can be present in a designated port area. This bill could allow for further development of marinas and boatyards, which will benefit the business of boating and generate revenue in the Commonwealth.
- **SB 403 and HB 471, Acts establishing a commission to study dredging needs for recreational boating in Commonwealth waterways:** MMTA assisted Senator Boncore and Representative Straus, both Co-Chairs of the Massachusetts Legislative Boating Caucus, in the drafting of this bill to create an advisory committee to study dredging needs for recreational boating in the Commonwealth. MMTA very much supports this bill because it is long overdue to engage a committee to study these needs and further implement more dredging projects geared towards recreational boating.
- **HB 455, An Act regarding designated port areas:** MMTA disfavors local review and approval of developments within a designated port area where a local Designated Port Area Master Plan is already necessary. This could delay projects even longer due to the additional local review and approval process. A municipality, which has implemented a Designated Port Area Master Plan has already expressed its standards and goals for the designated port area, therefore further local review is not necessary because the Commonwealth will review the project in relation to the Master Plan before it renders any approval.
- **HB 396, An Act establishing a revolving fund to supplement the funding of waterway projects and coastal protection initiatives:** MMTA supports general fund appropriations for public infrastructure and supports revolving fund mechanisms to address the serious gap in public infrastructure funding. MMTA would like to see dredging projects included in the "typical projects" that will be funded through this revolving fund.
- **HB 401, An Act relative to community preservation funds for coastal infrastructure:** MMTA supports this bill, which will provide for at least 10% of Community Preservation Act funds to be used for beach nourishment, dune restoration, and seawall maintenance and reconstruction in communities that adopt the Act. There is an extreme absence of funds available for these necessary uses and the percentage of CPA funds used for these mitigation strategies is essential to coastal communities.
- **HB 405, An Act relative to the financing of dredging projects:** MMTA supports any mechanism allowing additional dredging and navigational safety projects due to the

extreme absence of funding for these necessary operations. Funding from DEP of up to 75% for dredging projects and through the Waterways Trust Fund from bequests, restitutions, and gifts will surely help advance dredging projects and other necessary waterways improvements within the Commonwealth.

- **HB 406, An Act establishing a regional dredge grants program:** MMTA supports any mechanism, which provides funding for dredges and capital equipment for regional dredging projects. MMTA would support even more funding from DEP or the Commonwealth for dredging projects based on the extreme lack of funding currently available and based on the dire need to maintain the Commonwealth's waterways by dredging.
- **HB 468, An Act to invasive plants:** MMTA supports this additional funding for invasive plant controls and would like to see the funding include invasive plants within the waterways of the Commonwealth.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration in these comments. MMTA's Government Relations and Legal Counsel, Jamy Buchanan Madeja is always available to discuss any changes to the proposed legislation. Please feel free to contact her at 617-227-8410 or jmadeja@buchananassociates.com.

Sincerely,

Paul Nowak

Paul Nowak, President
Massachusetts Marine Trades Association