



Government Affairs
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March 10, 2021

The Honorable Lee Beyer, Chair
Oregon Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
900 Court Street NE, S-411
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chairman Beyer:

On behalf of the 7,200 BoatU.S. Members who call Oregon home, I am contacting you to voice our serious concerns with Senate Bill 840. With more than 770,000 Members, BoatU.S. represents the interest of recreational boat owners nationwide. By way of background, we note that over 60% of the nation's boat owners have an annual household income of less than \$100,000. For many, a boat is the single biggest investment they make in family recreation. They are highly sensitive to any increases in cost of what is a discretionary activity.

We understand the goal of SB 840 is to help address Oregon's significant challenge of funding the removal of abandoned and derelict vessels (ADV's.) This bill would allow counties to impose an additional registration fee on recreational boats of up to 100% of the state registration fee. While we appreciate the interest in addressing this problem, we have concerns with such a significant increase. This fee would be in addition to Oregon's not unsubstantial boat registration fees ranging from \$82 to \$362 biannually, fuel taxes, and other levies paid by recreational boat owners.

We are also concerned that this legislation does not ensure these funds are focused only on addressing recreational ADV issues. Commercial vessels often contribute to ADV problems, and the costs associated with their cleanup are magnitudes higher than for recreational boats. It is inequitable to put this burden on recreational boaters alone.

The committee should also note this proposal could jeopardize Oregon's access to funding from the U.S. Coast Guard's Recreational Boating Safety Grant Program. States that receive RBS funding are prohibited from using registration fees for other purposes¹. In 2021, Oregon will receive more than \$2.07 million in RBS funding.

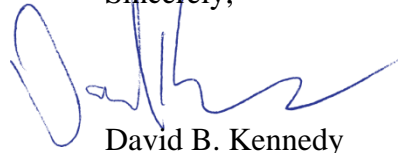
BoatU.S. has been actively engaged with a number of state and local governments to address the questions surrounding ADVs. We recognize the potential negative effect they have on the environment. In addition, we also understand that finding solutions to these issues requires support from many different stakeholders. Active, responsible boaters are willing to do their part but should not have to shoulder the entire burden of funding these programs.

We respectfully request that you not pass this legislation and, instead, engage with the recreational boating community and other stakeholders to find workable solutions to ADV issues.

¹ 46 U.S.C. Chapter 131 Recreational Boating Safety § 13107

Thank you for your consideration of our views. Please let us know if we can provide additional information on this or any other recreational boating matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Kennedy", with a large, stylized initial "D" on the left and a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

David B. Kennedy
Manger
BoatU.S. Government Affairs

cc: Members of the Oregon Senate Committee on Energy and Environment