



CONGRESSIONAL SPORTSMEN'S FOUNDATION

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Congressmen Alerted on Clean Boating Act of 2008 Recreational Boating and Anglers Threatened with Burdensome EPA Permits

Washington, DC – The Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF) hosted a Capitol Hill breakfast briefing today, sponsored by Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (B.A.S.S.), where members of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC) and other interested parties were informed about the importance and status of *The Clean Boating Act of 2008*. If the legislation passes, it could save recreational boaters and anglers from having to comply with Clean Water Act regulations originally designed for cargo container ships, cruise ships and supertankers - not recreational boats.

THE PROBLEM - For thirty-five years, the Environmental Protection Agency has exempted recreational boaters from the regulations that protected aquatic resources from pollutants and invasive species transported in the ballast water of commercial vessels. In 2006, a federal judge overturned the exemption. If not corrected by legislation, boaters would be required to obtain onerous Federal or State permits for normal incidental discharges such as bilge water, deck runoff and engine cooling water. Boaters could also face oppressive fines for non-compliance. The ruling goes into effect on September 30 of this year, unleashing not only a layer of new regulations from the EPA, but creating a new bureaucracy to deal with 18-million boaters applying for the permits.

THE LEGISLATION - Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Chair, Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL) introduced a bill, S. 2766, *The Clean Boating Act of 2008*, in March. The legislation would restore the EPA exemption for recreational boats. Last May, Boating Caucus Co-Chairmen Representative Candice Miller (R-MI) and Representative Gene Taylor (D-MS) introduced H. R. 2550, *The Recreational Boating Act of 2007* in the House of Representatives. The language of H.R. 2550 and the language of S.2667 will be the same in the final version.

Passage of the Clean Boating Act of 2008 by Congress would reestablish the exemption for America's recreational boaters. Congressional action is needed prior to a looming deadline for permit applications that would apply to all recreational and fishing boats, including charter boats.

THE BRIEFING - Jeff Crane, President of CSF, and the House Caucus leadership, Representatives Ron Kind (D-WI) and Paul Ryan (R-WI), welcomed everyone and thanked the members of CSC that took time from their hectic schedules to attend. Crane noted that, "Boaters and fishermen need a speedy legislative solution to avert a potential regulatory nightmare and enormous fines for noncompliance. The EPA does not need to be in the business of regulating a little rain water runoff and CSF is working with the bipartisan CSC to take the lead to correct this unintended possibility."

Chris Horton, Conservation Director of B.A.S.S. presented background information and commented on the impact that the regulations would have on recreational anglers. Horton said, "If action isn't taken soon, anglers will **need** to have a permit just to empty, or even operate, their livewells. We don't need another impediment to angling and boating at a time when we're trying to grow participation."

Ben Grumbles, Assistant Administrator for the Office of Water at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) informed the attendees about the current status of the exemption, its time limit and the regulations being proposed by the EPA if there is no legislative settlement. Grumbles stated, "We do not want to get into the permitting business for recreational boaters. However, we have September 30th circled in red on our calendar and are crafting the regulations for permits that would apply to recreational boaters. We are being driven by a court ruling which we are appealing. The best solution is legislation particularly if a judicial appeal is not successful."

Dylan Jones, Water Access Counsel for the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) brought those present up to date on where the legislation stands at this time. He is hopeful that policymakers will move swiftly. Jones made his point stating, "There are no costs to the taxpayers with this legislation; no funding is needed, no offsets – it's a no brainer."

Capt. Steve Chaconas of National Bass Guides demonstrated bass fishing techniques, spoke about the cleanup of the Potomac and encouraged those in attendance to take a kid or a friend fishing.

THE ACTION - The Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation continues to work with its partners in the fishing and boating community and to inform the leadership and members of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus to advance the Clean Boating Act of 2008.

About the Clean Boating Act 2008:

Visit www.nmma.org, <http://www.BoatBlue.org> or <http://www.BoatUS.com/gov>.

About the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF)

The Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation is the most respected and trusted proponent for hunters and fishermen in the political arena. With support from every major hunting and fishing organization, CSF is the leader in promoting sportsmen's issues with elected officials. CSF works directly with the bi-partisan, bi-cameral Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus in the U.S. Congress, as well as affiliated state sportsmen's caucuses in state legislatures around the country. For additional information, visit www.sportsmenslink.org or call 202-543-6850.