

June 16, 2015

Chairman Paul Schmid
Joint Committee on
Environment, Natural
Resources & Agriculture
State House, Room 473F
Boston, MA 02133

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

MASSACHUSETTS
MARINE TRADES
ASSOCIATION



RE: **SUPPORT** for HB 635: An Act relative to community preservation funds for seawall repair; Other legislation related to waterways and coastal infrastructure; HB 618, HB 631, HB 632, HB 633.

Dear Chairwoman Gobi and Chairman Schmid and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill 675: An Act relative to community preservation funds for seawall repairs and the several other bills related to waterways and coastal infrastructure before your Committee today. On behalf of the Massachusetts Marine Trades Association (MMA) we urge you to **support** these bills. The Commonwealth's ports, harbors and waterways are in desperate need of maintenance and improvements and these bills would create opportunities to address those needs.

Established in 1964, the MMA is the non-profit, statewide, representative body for over 1,200 marine trades businesses in the Commonwealth including boatyards, boat builders, marinas, boat dealers, retailers, repairers and marine industry professionals. Collectively our businesses contribute over \$2.0 billion in economic activity annually Massachusetts. Our purpose is to provide the framework for furthering the interests of the marine trades and the boating public through the promotion of boating, participation in legislation and professional improvement programs.

The current language of the Community Preservation Act (CPA) supports funding of repairs to waterways and ports infrastructure. The CPA recognizes Historic resources as: "a building, structure, vessel, real property, document or artifact that is listed or eligible for listing on the state register of historic places or has been determined by the local historic preservation commission to be significant in the history, archeology, architecture or culture of a city or town." And by definition, rehabilitation to include "the remodeling, reconstruction and making of extraordinary repairs to historic resources, open spaces, lands for recreational use and community housing for the purpose of making such historic resources, open

spaces, lands for recreational use and community housing functional for their intended use.”

Although we firmly believe the Act already supports the use of Community Preservation Funds for the restoration, rehabilitation and preservations of seawalls, bulkheads and other significant waterway infrastructure; HB 635, amending the Act to explicitly include these resources, would re-emphasize the State’s commitment to preserving our waterways and ensure that waterway and port facilities receive the support necessary for their continued safe operation and accessibility to the public at large. Readily available funds, such as the Community Preservation Funds, are essential; these waterways and facilities are the lifeblood of our coastal communities and are representative of the long standing maritime history of our State. We are reminded, seemingly on a daily basis, that critical waterways infrastructure are essential to maintaining economic activity and the security of both private and Commonwealth resources and property.

We consider the funding of waterways a priority for the stability and prosperity of coastal communities and beyond. The proposed amendment would ensure that waterways infrastructure would be a priority and that Community Preservation Funds would be readily available in the coming years when so much work needs to be accomplished in order to secure the viability of our waterways. The Massachusetts Marine Trades Association (MMTA) supports HB 635 and other legislation that seeks to maintain and improve the Commonwealth’s waterways and access to those unique assets.

Other legislation filed this session and before your Committee addressing the need to preserve and invest in our waterways infrastructure and which MMTA supports includes:

HB 618: An Act establishing a revolving fund to supplement the funding of waterway projects and coastal protection initiatives.

HB 633: An Act reestablishing the harbors and inland waters maintenance fund, which more specifically, targets ongoing maintenance issues that impair navigation such as maintenance dredging and the removal of old piers and vessels.

HB 631: An Act relative to the financing of dredging projects, which allows MassDEP to partially fund dredging, navigational and other infrastructure projects.

HB 632: An establishing regional dredge grant program, which provides funds for capital investment in dredging equipment and in turn, creates a regional dredging maintenance program.

Collectively, these bills provide the basis for reinvesting in our waterways in a meaningful capacity. The work necessary to rebuild and maintain this infrastructure is constant and without the proper funding and delegation of responsibility, the Commonwealth risks losing some of its most valuable assets which can be leveraged to support economic growth for the entire State. Recreation and tourism along with maritime industrial users require the modern and safe infrastructure toward which these bills work.

The recreational marine 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. With 186,000 state and federally registered vessels and 1 million anglers in the Commonwealth and over 5 million residents living within 10 miles of the ocean, any negative impact on the stability of the marine trades (economic, regulatory or others) has the potential to negatively affect millions of citizens and visitors.

The Association and its 300 member firms also seek to stem the exodus of recreational boating businesses from the Commonwealth and the loss of waters-edge usage for recreational boating purposes. The Association acts as a source of information about recreational boating and boating businesses for the general public, via its website at www.BoatMA.com; for the Massachusetts Legislature, where the Association is a frequent participant in public hearings and in the 50-member Legislative Boating Caucus; and for executive branch agencies, the MA Federal delegation and authorities with regulatory and economic development responsibilities.

On behalf of the entire membership of the Massachusetts Marine Trades Association, thank you for your service and your consideration of our **strong support of these bills**. Please do not hesitate to call on us should the committee wish to request additional information on any of these bills or on the business of boating in Massachusetts. MMTA is always available to discuss this and any other legislation. Please contact Jamy Buchanan Madeja, Esq., MMTA's Legal and Government Relations Counsel.

Respectfully Submitted,

Toby Burr, President, Massachusetts Marine Trades Association

cc: Representative James Cantwell
Representative Bruce Ayers
Representative Susan Gifford, Co-Chairwoman, Legislative Boating Caucus
Representative William Straus, Co-Chairman, Legislative Boating Caucus
Senator Anthony W. Petrucci, Co-Chairman, Legislative Boating Caucus
Senator Robert Hedlund, Co-Chairman, Legislative Boating Caucus