

June 2, 2015

Senator Michael J. Rodrigues
Joint Committee on Revenue
Room 213B
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Jay R. Kaufman
Joint Committee on Revenue
Room 34
State House
Boston, MA 02133

MASSACHUSETTS
MARINE TRADES
ASSOCIATION



RE: **SUPPORT** HB 2467 - An Act restoring the harbors and inland waters maintenance fund

Dear Chairmen Kaufman and Rodrigues and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important revenue designation of a modest portion (0.05 percent) of certain federal and state funds for restoring harbors and inland waters. The Massachusetts Marine Trades Association **SUPPORTS** this legislation, and will be happy to contribute staff resources to any working group needed to support the legislature in moving this bill into law.

MMTA has observed with dismay the decades of decay of the marine infrastructure owned by the Commonwealth and its municipalities, and has worked to find public private partnerships or other means of funding safe infrastructure. There used to be a systematic bond allocation for basic, ordinary maintenance to reduce the likelihood of catastrophic physical deterioration or disaster-related losses. It is no more, this funding system. We are in great need of restored, methodical attention to the waterways infrastructure or we will not only lose public and private property, we will continue to lose to neighboring states the jobs which go with this infrastructure.

Established in 1964, the Massachusetts Marine Trades Association (MMTA) is the statewide, non-profit, representative body for over 1,200 marine trades businesses in the Commonwealth. Our businesses employ over 16,000 men and women and generate an estimated \$2.08 billion in annual economic activity for Massachusetts. The mission of the Association is to further the interests of the marine trades and the boating public through the promotion of boating, participation in legislation and professional improvement programs.

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 over 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..

This bill provides 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 for economic growth for the entire State. Jobs, recreation and tourism along with maritime industrial users require the modern and safe infrastructure toward which these bills work.

MMTA is always available to discuss this or any other bill, please contact Jamy Buchanan Madeja, MMTA Legal and Government Relations Counsel at 612-227-8410 or jmadeja@buchananassociates.com.

Respectfully submitted,



Toby Burr
President, Massachusetts Marine Trades Association

Cc Representative Tacky Chan, Sponsor
Boating Caucus Co-Chairs Senators Hedlund, Petrucelli, Representatives Keenan,
Gifford