



Massachusetts Bay Harbor Safety Committee
National Historic Park
100 1st Ave, #102
Charlestown Navy Yard,
Boston, MA 02129

May 6, 2019

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

RE: HB 821 – House Docket 271 – Filed on 1/9/2019
An Act relative to boater safety to be known as the David Hanson Act – Support

Dear Committee Members:

Please accept this letter on behalf of the Massachusetts Bay Harbor Safety Committee (MBHSC) in support of HB 821 to institute Boater Safety Education on the waters of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The MBHSC was established as a public forum with the desires to facilitate discussion and promote the exchange of ideas, thoughts and advice among all stakeholders on a wide range of issues relevant to the waterways of Massachusetts Bay covering the ports, harbors, bays and rivers of Massachusetts from the New Hampshire border to Plymouth Harbor. The MBHSC is comprised of public and private stakeholders with vital interests in assuring safe navigation to protect the environment, property and personnel on the waterways. The MBHSC accomplishes its mission by disseminating, adopting or developing appropriate standards and best practices that address operational elements of maritime operations unique to the region and may advise regulatory bodies and seek actions of non-regulatory entities to achieve the resolution of concerns and enhance safety. Issues include but are not limited to: communications, traffic management, anchorages, recreational boating and other topics dealing with safety, efficiency, preservation and improvement of the transit and usage of the regional waterway system. The MBHSC provides an inclusive, cooperative and equitable venue for addressing waterways issues to ensure the continuation and improvement of prudent management practices for our local waterways. Throughout the process, the MBHSC strives to ensure reliable and efficient marine transportation.

The recreational vessel area does include such items as ensuring safety education, Rules of the Road, and large vessel awareness. These are concerns which would be specifically addressed in the Hanson Act.

The Massachusetts Bay Harbor Safety Committee supports Mandatory Recreational Boater Education combined with the most expedient phase-in period possible. It is imperative to educate boat operators between the ages of 26 and 55 years as they are involved in the largest proportion

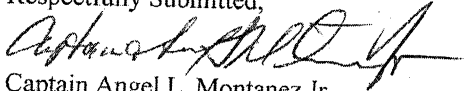
of accidents and fatalities. As an organization, we advocate for the issuance of a certificate attesting that the individual has passed a boating skills test, preferably through a proctored examination.

Mandatory boater education is supported by organizations including the Massachusetts Marine Trade Association, National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, U. S. Coast Guard, U. S. Power Squadron, and Coast Guard Auxiliary among others. Twenty five states and the District of Columbia require mandatory boater education. This includes our neighboring states of New Hampshire and Rhode Island. Boating safety should be a concern for everyone regardless if you're a boat owner or a passenger, education in boat operations, navigation, and life-saving skills is important for this prevents accidents, and minimizes them if they unfortunately occur.

The David Hanson Act is a sensible and responsible way to implement mandatory boater education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

On behalf of the Massachusetts Bay Harbor Safety Committee, I thank you for your consideration and offer our strong support of HB 821. As the bill moves forward thru committee, the MBHSC is standing by to assist the committee on finalization of the bills language through our public forums which promote and exchanges ideas, thoughts and advice among all stakeholders.

Respectfully Submitted,



Captain Angel L. Montanez Jr.
Chairman