

March 24, 2025

The Honorable Tom Cole, Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole:

BoatU.S. is the largest advocacy, services and safety group for recreational boaters with over 750,000 dues paying members. With members in all 50 states, we represent the full range of boating activities and interests. Our members share a love of being on the water, with a boat often being their single biggest investment in family outdoor recreation.

Several proposals have been advanced to reduce the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) workforce and seek other cost savings for its budget. Boaters rely on a number of services provided by NOAA agencies such as the National Weather Service (NWS), National Ocean Services (NOS) and the National Marine Sanctuaries (NMS.) On behalf of our members nationwide, we are concerned that indiscriminate reductions of NOAA agency staff and funding would undermine the safety of boaters on the water and reduce opportunities for enjoyment of marine environments for all. Accurate weather forecasts, updated charts and well managed resources are vital for the safety and well-being of recreational boating activities across the nation.

The NWS is responsible for monitoring and predicting severe weather events, such as hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods. These natural disasters can cause significant loss of life and property, and the timely warnings and forecasts provided by the NWS are instrumental in mitigating their impact on boaters. For example, an accurate 5 day forecast of a hurricane's landfall will give boat owners crucial time to prepare for the storm. Reductions in the NWS's ability to make such forecasts will likely lead to greater vessel losses, more marine debris and costly clean-up operations.

The Service gathers crucial data that supports a wide range of public and private stakeholders, including military, public safety and maritime operations. Budget cuts to the NWS would not only hinder its ability to gather this critical information but will also negatively impact its interpretation and delivery to all the end-users. We are concerned that broad cuts to NWS staff and funding could weaken the Service's ability to sustain and enhance its forecasting capabilities, endangering boaters' lives and increasing the risk of economic losses.

We have similar concerns with reductions in force and budget cuts for the National Ocean Services and Office of Coast Survey. NOS and OCS gather and interpret accurate underwater surveys and tidal predictions, creating the baseline data on which boaters rely for their charts. Accurate charts and tide information are fundamental to boating safety. We also note that this

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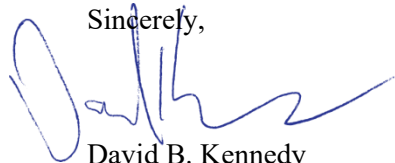
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information is relied upon for many other maritime stakeholders including the U.S. Coast Guard, commercial vessels and the military. Gathering and distributing accurate coastal information is a fundamental governmental function and must be sustained.

Regarding the National Marine Sanctuary programs, we note that boaters spend countless hours enjoying these marine “parks” and benefit from the conservation work performed by its staff. Recreational uses are well established and managed in many sanctuaries. For example, mooring buoys in the Florida Keys Nation Marine Sanctuary allow boaters to access these iconic reefs while protecting them from damage from anchors. Open and accessible sanctuaries are a vital part of the \$230 billion recreational boating and fishing industry, the single largest component of the \$1.2 trillion outdoor recreation economy.

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

Sincerely,



David B. Kennedy  
BoatU.S. Government Affairs

Cc:

The Honorable Rosa Delauro, Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515