



**RBOC**  
Protecting your boating interests.

925 L Street • Suite 260  
Sacramento CA 95814  
[www.rbo.org](http://www.rbo.org)

**WINTER 2014**

# BOATER BRIEF

## Regional Water Boards Address Copper

RBOC is working to protect boaters as local regional water quality control boards implement the copper TMDL in Shelter Island Yacht Basin in San Diego and propose new copper TMDLs in Orange County and Marina del Rey.

This issue is quite timely. Just this month, over the objections of boaters and RBOC, the Los Angeles regional board adopted a copper TMDL for Marina del Rey.

In each of these situations, a good deal of misunderstanding surrounds the topic of copper based anti-fouling paint.

Most water bodies in California show levels of dissolved copper that are higher than the Federal standard.

Some regional water quality control boards, following the requirements of the Clean Water Act, have started to implement measures that seek to reduce the amount of copper in the water. Their target has been recreational boaters and their reliance upon copper based anti-fouling paint.

RBOC takes the position that when an alternative hull coating becomes available, and is shown to be effective and affordable, boaters will embrace that option. RBOC also holds that the real problem is that the current Federal standard is overly protective and that, in fact, the copper in the water of our marinas is not in any way toxic to benthic organisms.

RBOC is working to obtain a decision by the Environmental Protection Agency to promulgate a new and economic method to determine a realistic copper standard. The Biotic Ligand Model (BLM) could be adopted and RBOC will work to encourage State Agencies to defer any measure on copper until that model can be used to correctly assess impairment to marine waters due to copper.

## Legislation to Phase-In Boat Operator Certification

RBOC is working in support of SB 941 that has been introduced by Senator Bill Monning [D-Carmel] and Senator Mark DeSaulnier [D-Concord] to phase-in a vessel operator certification requirement.

We are pleased that SB 941 is being pursued to require boat operators pass a boating education examination and obtain a vessel operator card issued by the state Division of Boating and Waterways [DBW] in order to operate a boat in California that is propelled by an engine.

RBOC has been working with the co-authors in the development of SB 941, which is modeled on legislation RBOC sponsored previously. This new measure will work to further enhance safety on the waterways and we will be working together with Senators Monning and DeSaulnier, as well as other stakeholders, to accomplish enhanced boater safety.

SB 941 would require DBW to issue a vessel operator card to individuals who have passed an approved examination. The requirement to obtain a vessel operator card would apply initially to operators 20 years of age or younger with a phased-in implementation date depending on the age of the individual. The seven-year

phase-in would begin in 2018 and would eventually apply to everyone as of 2025.

Online education such as the BoatU.S. Foundation course will be an option. The BoatU.S Foundation course is available at: <http://www.boatus.org/courses/>

RBOC will continue to be engaged as SB 941 moves forward. Additional key provisions in the bill are proposed statutes for the vessel operator certification program to be administered by DBW, establish a procedure to set new fees at levels that are reasonable and directly related to the costs of implementation, and phase-in a lifetime certificate for operators who pass a state-approved examination.

## Support RBOC

We estimate that, over the years, RBOC's efforts are saving each boating family several hundreds of dollars each year. RBOC represents all California Boaters and operates solely on donations from boaters like You!

### We need your help.

- ▶ RBOC encourages all yacht club members to contribute a minimum of \$20 per boating family per year.
- ▶ Boaters who are not members of yacht clubs, benefit from RBOC's activities, and are asked to contribute \$20 per family.

### Not much for such a return on investment!!

**Mail contributions to:** RBOC  
Treasurer Otis Brock, 1253 Yuba Avenue,  
San Pablo, CA 94806

**Contribute on-line:** [www.rbo.org](http://www.rbo.org)  
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