



RBOC

Protecting your boating interests.

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BOATER BRIEF

RBOC Directors Lobby in Sacramento

On March 15, members of RBOC's voluntary board of directors advocated in Sacramento on several key issues that are being considered in the Capitol this year.

The 28 meetings held during RBOC's annual legislative day in the capitol provided opportunities for legislators to meet directly with their boating constituents from throughout the state, and to develop the relationships that enable the boating community to have a voice in the decisions being made.

Topics included boat registration fees and fuel tax dollars, as well as the importance of those funds being dedicated to programs and services that benefit boaters.

RBOC also co-hosted this year's California Boating Congress in April, with the organization leadership attending this annual event in Sacramento that brings together boaters and the boating industry organizations in a unified effort.

Boater Fees and Taxes – State Parks & Division of Boating and Waterways Budget

RBOC appreciates the decision made by the Governor and Legislature with the state budget to refrain from significantly increasing boat registration

fees and convening a stakeholder process to provide a path to expanded opportunities for all Californians to enjoy on-the-water recreation in the years ahead.

This process provided the opportunity for all interested parties and the state to review the expenditure of more than \$100 million each year in fuel tax dollars attributable to boats, the most effective and efficient use of those funds, to identify approaches for increasing the small percentage of those monies currently directed to boating programs, and to enhance the financial participation of non-boaters who benefit from the current and future programs.

The Governor's May Budget Revise may propose one or more solutions to the Harbors and Watercraft Revolving Fund [HWRF] deficiency. RBOC is advocating that the Legislature ensure that the recommendations developed through this stakeholder process are incorporated. The recommendations include:



- A report on the economic impact of recreational boating in California.
- The enhanced participation and financial contribution of stakeholders and beneficiaries who benefit from current and future programs and services.
- The enhancement of the statutory authority and role of the Commission to provide not only advice, but also

consent on the Division's loans and grants from the HWRF.

■ The identification of approaches that can be taken to meet the new challenges identified through the stakeholder engagement process such as the number of abandoned and derelict vessels that are not addressed by the existing SAVE grant program.

■ The enhancement of the Division's administration of essential programs.

■ The identification of efficiencies and programmatic improvements to programs that are not attracting the desired number of recipients due to statutory requirements that may be out-of-date.

■ Encouragement of Californians to take advantage of the unique and diverse on-the-water opportunities that exist throughout the state.

■ A return of a significant amount of the motor vehicle fuel taxes attributable to recreational boaters to the HWRF.

■ An identification and expenditure of other funds for grants for beach erosion control.

■ As appropriate, a vessel registration fee adjustment that is reasonable and that corresponds to the revenues and savings that are recommended above.

Beach Erosion & Replenishment, Shoreline Erosion Control

RBOC supports the dedication of state general fund dollars in the current year's budget and in the Governor's proposed budget for the next fiscal year for beach erosion control and replenishment.

This program will become increasingly important within the state's response to climate change, will necessarily expand beyond sand, and benefits all Californians.

RBOC is concerned with the financial and workload burden that AB 966 [Davies] would place on the underfunded DBW to prepare a report to the Legislature on shoreline erosion control and public beach restoration programs. The author informs us that the bill is not intended to tap boater funds. This will better accomplish the objective of the measure to detail and discuss existing programs, evaluate the need for continued projects and program application requirements, and identify the beaches of the state that contain a critically eroded shoreline.

Abandoned and Derelict Commercial Vessels



The state budget for the current fiscal year recognizes the benefits all Californians receive through the dedication of state general fund dollars to programs that aim at preventing and addressing the negative environmental impacts that occur when a large vessel formerly used for commercial purposes is abandoned on the state's waterways.

Recreational boaters have already stepped up, sponsoring and financially supporting a landmark, effective state surrendered and abandoned vessel exchange [SAVE] program managed by the Division of Boating and Waterways [DBW] to reimburse local governments when they accept a recreational vessel in lieu of abandonment or remove an abandoned or derelict recreational vessel from their waterways.

RBOC has communicated with the

author and proponents to our interest in ensuring that, as the funding provisions for AB 748 [Villapudua] are identified, the program does not impinge upon or create budget pressures on the SAVE program and DBW. We appreciate the provision that has been included in the legislation to ensure that HWRP funds are not tapped for this new program.

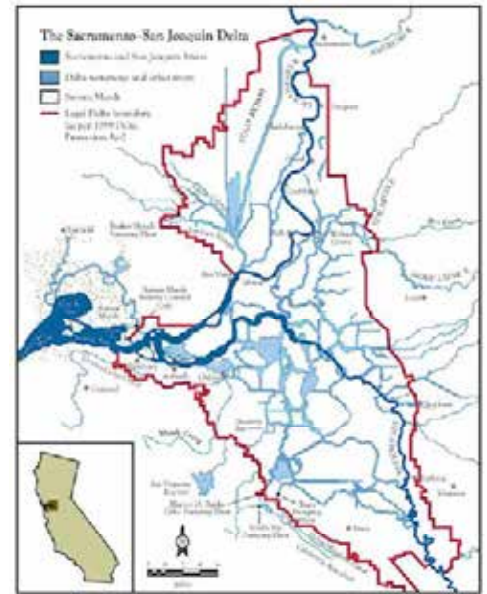
Boating and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta

RBOC continues to oppose the Delta Conveyance Project as planned, which even though revised to one tunnel, still would significantly impede navigation and harm Delta recreation. Another 15-20 year project that not only disrupts all uses of the waterways, but also overruns its budget, and may not finish on schedule or at all, is not the best answer.

Available funds and attention instead should be directed to more feasible ways to improve and mitigate water quality issues. The current planned project would severely disrupt navigation, boating-related commerce and communities throughout and after construction. It may also significantly and permanently increase the transport of invasive species into the Delta waterways, and exacerbate algae blooms. These reduce recreational opportunities on the waterways and already impose significant costs on the boating community.

AB 1613 [Bains] would require the Department of Water Resources to identify strategic locations in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta where barriers could be constructed to combat salinity intrusion that would reduce the need to contaminate fresh water. The bill would require the department to, at a minimum, identify strategic locations in specified areas.

- (a) Threemile Slough.
- (b) Dutch Slough.
- (c) West False River.
- (d) Dutch Slough and West False River.



- (e) West False River and Fishermans Cut.
- (f) Old River near Franks Tract.
- (g) 2-Gates Fish Protection Demonstration Project sites (Old River and Connection Slough).
- (h) Sutter Slough, Steamboat Slough, and West False River.
- (i) Sutter Slough, Steamboat Slough, and 2-Gates Fish Protection Demonstration Project site.
- (j) Threemile Slough and West False River.
- (k) Threemile Slough and 2-Gates Fish Protection Demonstration Project sites.
- (l) Old River at Bacon Island.
- (m) Old River upstream of Indian Slough.
- (n) San Joaquin River below head of Old River.





Offshore Windfarms

RBOC is concerned that plans are being developed to erect substantial wind farm clusters in navigable waters on the California coast. These wind farms could cause unwelcome effects impairing recreational and commercial navigation. Further, they may impair endangered marine mammal populations and result in other environmental harm.

Both may be mitigated by careful placement analysis, configuration of support lines back to the shore, and location impact assessment studies where appropriate. RBOC is following early state legislative activity including AB 3 [Zbur] that would establish the California Offshore Wind Advancement Act to develop a strategy for seaport readiness for offshore wind energy developments, and to study the feasibility of achieving 70% and 85%



in-state assembly and manufacturing of offshore wind energy projects.

Another measure, SB 286 [McGuire] would establish the California Offshore Wind Energy Fisheries Working Group to address impacts to certain fisheries from offshore wind energy projects, including providing specified compensation to affected fishers and other groups.

Outdoor Recreation & Preservation of Water

RBOC supports the expansion of sustainable outdoor recreation, the preservation of ocean and inland waterways, and the promotion of the economic development and job growth that can occur in this sector.

As these initiatives move forward through legislation and administrative actions including the 30x30 and Outdoors for All efforts, and baselines are established to measure our progress, it is essential to acknowledge the significant progress that California has already achieved, the tremendous value that on-the-water recreation provides to sustaining our mental and physical health, and the importance of measures that have considered and incorporate a variety of reasoned perspectives.

Legislation addressing this issue includes SB 337 [Min] that would place into law the state goal to conserve at least 30% of California's lands and coastal waters by 2030.

Vessel Speed Limits off the Coast

AB 953 [Connolly] would require the Ocean Protection Council to implement a statewide voluntary vessel speed reduction and sustainable shipping program for the California coast in order to reduce air pollution, the risk of fatal vessel strikes on whales, and harmful underwater acoustic impacts. RBOC has engaged with the author and proponents and has received assurances that the provisions are intended to apply to commercial vessels and not recreational vessels. Recent amendments to the measure confirm this.



Please Contribute

Your contribution helps RBOC continue our professional advocacy and grassroots efforts that ensures we are able to continue to enjoy boating. Please contribute \$20 or more and become a Friend of RBOC. www.RBOC.org

Please note that, due to RBOC's extensive lobbying activities, contributions to our nonprofit advocacy organization are not tax deductible.

