

National Recreational Boating Safety Coalition

June 17, 2015

The Coalition met at the offices of AAA in Washington, DC. Tom O'Day chaired the meeting.

Attendance

Tom O'Day (NRBSC); Steve Blackistone (NTSB); Gale Alls (USPS); Vann Burgess (USCG); Earl Waesche (NBF); Bruce Johnston (USCGAux); Reuben Overmark (SafeKids), and Cara Costa (SafeKids).

National Association of State Boating Law Administrators

Since Charlie Sledd was unable to attend, he sent this brief report for the minutes.

For the latest information on Operation DryWater, NASBLA's Annual Leadership Academy, and the Annual NASBLA Conference, please go to www.NASBLA.org

The 2014 NASBLA annual conference will be held October 16-19, 2014 in Bar Harbor, Maine.

Coast Guard

Vann Burgess noted that the Sport Fish Trust Restoration Fund had been reauthorized through the end of July as part of the larger surface transportation program. It includes only partial funds for national organization grants. Senate Commerce Committee Chair Thune (R-SD) has introduced the Trust Fund authorization as a stand-alone bill (S. 834), but it isn't clear whether Congress will act upon the bill separately or include it in the larger surface transportation package.

The 2014 boating accident statistics were released in May. Although there was an increase in the number of fatalities (to 610) from the previous year, the last 36 months have been the safest on record.

National Transportation Safety Board

Steve Blackistone reported that NTSB is developing plans to hold a 1-day public forum in early 2016 on issues related to shared waterways. Participants would include Federal agencies, State representative, and private organizations that are impacted by shared, congested waterways. Coalition participants will be provided further information as it becomes available.

National Boating Federation

Earl Waesche, Legislative Director, shared NBF's June legislative update. NBF is opposing a move to use only electronic aids to navigation, noting that many recreational boaters do not have the means to acquire and use these electronic aids. Van Sledzik responded that he is not aware of a Coast Guard plan to remove visual aids, and that electronic aids are intended for commercial applications.

The Environmental Protection Agency plans to increase the mandated level of ethanol in gasoline, which has raised significant concerns among the recreational community. However, EPA and the Coast Guard have given the National Marine Manufacturers' Assoc. a grant to identify alternatives for engines used in recreational boats.

Earl also distributed a legislative summary that focuses on the EPA ethanol standard and Coast Guard reauthorization bill, which includes the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund.

State Legislative Action

Tom O'Day distributed a summary of gaps in boater education and PFD laws, and 2015 legislative activities. An updated summary, reflecting discussions at the meeting, will be circulated separately.

Most states have adjourned their 2015 sessions with little boating safety legislation of significance having been adopted.

Richard Moore, Florida Boating Law Administrator, has written questioning our criteria for determining laws that require education for all boaters. He argues our reporting that "traditional phase-in laws that require education for boaters born after a specific date" meets the standard is deceptive since these laws in most of the states only cover younger boaters. Future coalition reports will try to show the limitations of such laws.

Safe Kids Worldwide

Coalition participants were invited to a reception to meet the Child Injury Prevention Network Members of Safe Kids Worldwide at a reception in the Cannon Caucus Room on July 29.

Next Meeting

The coalition will meet again on October 28. This will be the final meeting for 2015. A meeting notice and advance agenda will be sent out shortly before then.