

National Boating Federation  
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October 2017

**Bill to Allow Year-Round Sales of E15 Dies in Senate Committee:** A bill dubbed the “Consumer and Fuel Retailers Choice Act,” which would have allowed for year-round sales of fuels blended with 15 percent ethanol, died in committee last week, something the recreational marine industry and the boating community viewed as a win.

Politico Pro Energy reported that the Environment and Public Works Chairman, Sen. John Barasso, R-Wyo., and bill author Sen. Deb Fischer, R-Neb., withdrew S. 517 because it lacked the votes to emerge from committee.

“This is good news for boaters,” BoatUS government affairs manager David Kennedy told Trade Only Today. “It continues to highlight what we’ve got with this mandate and the broader fuel policy problem. It’s something BoatUS continues to work on.” Also, the **National Marine Manufacturers Association** said the withdrawal follows “countless meetings and discussions NMMA had with key Senate offices to ensure they knew of the damaging impacts of E15 on marine engines.” The NMMA activated the industry’s grassroots platform, Boating United, resulting in thousands of boaters throughout the country adding their voice to the issue, including the **National Boating Federation**.

Republicans such as Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Okla., who opposed the bill, saw it as a chance to weaken the Clean Air Act, Politico Pro Energy reported. Industry sources told the news outlet that Democrats had a string of their own plans to try to address concerns about higher food prices and increased air pollution.

The combined weight of the amendments under discussion ultimately sank the bill. “The original sponsor said the votes aren't there; I don't expect to see it this year,” Barrasso told the outlet. Fischer agreed that the bill will not come up for a vote this year.

**Congressmen Wyden & Bishop Announce Bipartisan Legislation to Improve Access to Public Lands & Waters:** U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., and Chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee Rob Bishop, R-Utah, introduced legislation in the Senate and House to remove barriers to outdoor recreation and boost rural economies across the country.

Their bipartisan Recreation Not Red-Tape (RNR) Act, S. 1633, and its companion bill, H. R. 3400, would promote access to outdoor recreation opportunities and allow more visitors to get outdoors. The RNR Act would streamline the permitting process for guides and recreation enthusiasts, hold federal agencies accountable for making outdoor recreation a priority for the first time and increase volunteerism to address the maintenance backlog on America’s public lands. “Cumbersome permitting processes and other bureaucratic roadblocks have significantly undermined access to recreational

opportunities for lands and waters that should be available for all Americans to enjoy,” Bishop said. “This bipartisan bill cuts through that red-tape and ensures federal land managers are focused on their role in providing the public with high-quality outdoor experiences.”

A hearing was held on H.R. 3400 by Chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee Rob Bishop, with favorable comments by those in attendance.

The RNR Act of 2017 is supported by a range of recreation and conservation groups, including **The Wilderness Society**, Outdoor Industry Association, Outdoor Alliance, Trout Unlimited, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, the YMCA, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership and Travel Oregon.

“As evidenced by the \$887 billion in consumer spending and the 7.6 million jobs supported by the outdoor industry, recreation on public lands is as popular in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as any other time in our nation’s history, and it’s one of our biggest economic drivers,” said Amy Roberts, Outdoor Industry Association’s executive director. “Unfortunately, many of the regulations and agency policies that govern our public lands’ use are outdated. We support the bipartisan effort of Senator Wyden and Chairman Bishop to update antiquated processes and reduce barriers to recreation for today’s outdoor users. We believe the pragmatic approach of the Recreation Not Red-Tape bill will lead to healthier communities and healthier economies across the country.”

**More Funding for Dredging and Maintenance of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway:** As reported by Boat U.S., funding has increased for the ICW. New dredging projects on the ICW will have a positive economic impact for many marinas and small businesses that host boaters. In areas of South Carolina and Georgia the draft gets down to 3 feet, but dredging is scheduled to start in October. In fact the funding tide is actually rising, not just in Georgia, but also throughout much of the ICW, according to federal officials.

This good news about the ICW is due in large part by the efforts on Capitol Hill by the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway Association (AIWA). In fiscal year 2016, AIWA convinced Congress to increase funding by a whopping 90 percent over what had been proposed in the President’s budget for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that year. The AIWA advocates every year to ensure the federal funding required to maintain 1,100 miles of channels threading through the five south Atlantic states, from Norfolk, Virginia, to Miami, Florida.