

National Boating Federation

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Legislative Update on Wallop/Breaux Reauthorization: The Senate Energy and Public Works Committee (EPW) passed a two-year Highway bill and the House is working on another version which has not yet been presented or passed in Committee. However, the Wallop/Breaux Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund (SFRBTF) which is normally included in the Highway bill, was not in the Senate bill, although prospects for eventual inclusion look promising according to comments by certain Senators and staff. Funding for the SFRBTF is obtained from taxes on fishing equipment, motorboat fuel, imported boats and small engines. In turn the funds are then allocated to Federal and state programs for wetlands conservation, sport fish restoration, boating safety, boating access and the Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) program. A number of marina expansions have been implemented in the Bay area by grants provided through the BIG program.

House Approves USCG Authorization Act: The House of Representatives has passed the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2011 (HR2838). The bill has been sent to the Senate for consideration. The White House in a policy statement has expressed opposition to the House bill because it includes a provision to decommission two icebreakers, the Polar Sea and the Polar Star. Congress had already appropriated funds to extend the service life of the icebreakers. While the decommissioning language is still in the bill that passed, a compromise to perhaps eliminate it is expected in the Senate version of the bill.