

NATIONAL BOATING FEDERATION  
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**American Boating Congress Is Held, Many Industry Leaders Visiting DC for Congressional Dialogue:** As reported by NMMA, more than 250 business leaders from across all sectors of the U.S. recreational boating industry descended on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., for the annual [American Boating Congress \(ABC\)](#), a three-day advocacy event. ABC is organized by NMMA and is co-hosted by 35 other industry and boating organizations. To learn more click on American Boating Congress.

Recreational boating is no small contributor to the U.S. economy. During the three-day event industry stakeholders will communicate on Capitol Hill, the significance of our industry's \$121 billion annual economic direct, indirect and induced economic impact in addition, the priority issues facing recreational boating. Recreational boating supports more than 650,000 direct and indirect jobs and nearly 35,000 businesses nationwide. The industry's popularity continues to grow as nearly 88 million Americans took to the water in the U.S. in 2014. With 72% of boat owners earning a household income of less than \$100,000, recreational boating is a decidedly middle class activity.

While meeting with policy makers, ABC attendees addressed some of the more pressing issues facing boaters and the U.S. boating industry including the Renewable Fuel Standard and E15, corporate tax reform and its affect on small businesses, aquatic invasive species and how the industry is responding as well as many other legislative and regulatory concerns. A total of twelve concurrent issues workshops were held during this year's conference, each covering a different priority area affecting a specific industry segment.

Prominent speakers addressing areas of interest for the U.S. recreational boating industry included a keynote address from David Gregory, former NBC Meet the Press moderator as well as: Congressman Rob Wittman (VA-1), Congressman Curt Clawson (FL-19), Mayor Tomas Regalado, City of Miami and Eileen Sobek, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA.

**US Coast Guard Releases 2014 Recreational Boating Statistics Report:** WASHINGTON DC— The U.S. Coast Guard Wednesday released its 2014 Recreational Boating Statistics, revealing boating fatalities that year totaled 610, the second-lowest number of yearly boating fatalities on record. From 2013 to 2014, deaths increased from 560 to 610, an 8.9 percent increase, injuries increased from 2,620 to 2,678, a 2.2 percent increase and the total number of accidents increased from 4,062 to 4,064, a 0.05 percent increase. Even with these increases as compared to the record low year of 2013, 2012 to 2014 collectively set record lows for accidents, deaths and injuries.

The fatality rate of 5.2 deaths per 100,000 registered recreational vessels reflected a 10.6 percent increase from the previous year's rate of 4.7 deaths per 100,000 registered recreational vessels. Property damage totaled approximately \$39 million.

"We thank our partners for their work in boating safety, particularly for the Wear It! and other key outreach initiatives promoting life jacket use, boating education efforts, and Operation Dry Water activities. Together, we focus on the important role of life jacket use, navigational knowledge and safe, sober boating to prevent accidents," said Capt. Jon Burton, director of inspections and compliance at U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters.

The report states alcohol use was the leading contributing factor in fatal boating accidents; it was listed as the leading factor in 21 percent of the deaths. Operator inattention, improper lookout, operator inexperience, excessive speed and alcohol use ranked as the top five primary contributing factors in accidents.

Where the cause of death was known, 78 percent of fatal boating accident victims drowned; of those drowning victims, 84 percent were not wearing a life jacket. Where boating instruction was known, 77 percent of deaths occurred on vessels where the operator had not received boating safety instructions. The most common types of vessels involved in reported accidents were open motorboats, personal watercraft and cabin motorboats. The vessel types with the highest number of fatalities were open motorboats, canoes and kayaks. The Coast Guard reminds all boaters to boat responsibly while on the water: wear a life jacket; take a boating safety course; get a free vessel safety check; and avoid alcohol or other impairing substance consumption.

**Hawaii Passes a Bill to End Ethanol in Gas:** Hawaii lawmakers have put the state at the front of a national discussion over the future of ethanol in gasoline by passing a bill that puts an end to a requirement that the corn based additive be mixed into the fuel sold in the state. The move comes as Congress faces pressure to review the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) that mandates that more ethanol and other renewables be in the nation's fuel supply.

While the bill passed the Legislature, Hawaii Gov. David Ige hasn't made a final decision on the bill, but he indicated support, saying no one invested in ethanol in Hawaii despite tax credits. The bill passed amid an odd coalition of environmentalists, fuel manufacturers and poultry farmers who blamed ethanol for cutting into their profits by raising the cost of feed and thereby the cost of food. Also diversion of corn to create ethanol in gas is causing corn prices to skyrocket. Florida ended the inclusion of ethanol in gas in 2013, making Hawaii the second state to pass such a bill. We also understand that two other Congressional leaders, Pennsylvania Senator Pat Toomey and California Senator Diane Feinstein, have introduced bills that would repeal the ethanol mandate in the RFS.

NBF applauds the efforts of Hawaii Gov. Ige, Pennsylvania Senator Toomey and California Senator Feinstein to end the inclusion of ethanol in gas in their respective states.

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