

# Angling & Boating Alliance

June 9, 2021

The Honorable Peter DeFazio Chairman  
House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee  
2165 Rayburn  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Sam Graves Ranking Member  
House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee  
2164 Rayburn  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Raul Grijalva Chairman  
House Natural Resources Committee  
1324 Longworth  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bruce Westerman Ranking Member  
House Natural Resources Committee  
1329 Longworth  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman DeFazio, Chairman Grijalva, Ranking Member Graves, and Ranking Member Westerman:

On behalf of the Angling & Boating Alliance (Alliance), an ad hoc coalition of national recreational boating, angling, outdoor recreation interests, conservation groups, and state boating safety and natural resources agencies committed to the sustainable future of the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Safety Trust Fund (Trust Fund), we write to urge the inclusion of the *Sport Fish Restoration, Recreational Boating Safety, and Wildlife Restoration Act of 2021* (H.R. 3702) in the base text of the House's reauthorization provisions of the comprehensive transportation bill and support its enactment.

The Trust Fund is one of the most successful "user pays – public benefits" model programs in the world, relying on excise taxes on fishing tackle and electric trolling motors, as well as small engine and motorboat fuel taxes, to fund activities that include fisheries research and management, habitat restoration, fish hatchery operations, aquatic resources education, boating access construction, and boating safety programs. Reauthorization will also continue funding a highly successful and award-winning national outreach and communication effort that has grown participation in fishing and boating for all ages, genders while growing the Trust Fund. Reauthorization of the Trust Fund will allow state agencies to continue to fulfill their obligations to anglers, boaters, the public, and to conserve our natural resources.

Additionally, this reauthorizing language will:

- Continue depositing fuel taxes associated with recreational motorboats and small engines into the Trust Fund.
- Provide opportunities through the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council to study the evolving challenges and solutions associated with derelict vessels, including recycling options, processes, or potential uses of such vessels to inform future investments and policies.
- Authorize a Government Accountability Office report to examine the increasing use of non-motorized vessels and their impacts on both motorized and non-motorized vessel access, user conflicts at waterway access points, and the use of Sport Fish Restoration Program funds to

provide non-motorized vessel access. This report will be crucial to understanding some of the changing recreation habits of Americans today, how it affects recreational motorized boaters and others who are dependent upon public waterway access points and inform the future of recreational boating access.

- Update administrative provisions for the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), allowing the administrative flexibility needed for the Service to address the states' identified administration needs, more effectively and efficiently utilize administrative funds, and provide the Service with consistent accessibility of administrative funds between the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs.
- Change the charge the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council established by the Secretary of the Interior to be a federal advisory committee for both the Department of the Interior and the Department of Commerce.

Since first enacted by Congress in 1950 and expanded in 1984 through the "Wallop-Breaux Amendment," the Trust Fund and subsequent reauthorizations have been a widely supported, bipartisan effort to continue a critical source of funding for state natural resource agencies and state boating safety administrators. In order to ensure this high level of continued success, it is of the utmost importance to reauthorize the Trust Fund as provided in H.R. 3702 through 2025.

Please include the *Sport Fish Restoration, Recreational Boating Safety, and Wildlife Restoration Act of 2021* (H.R. 3702) in the transportation bill and support its enactment. As members of the Alliance, we stand ready to assist in ensuring the critical reauthorization of this "user pays – public benefits" model of aquatic resource conservation and boating access is again realized.

Sincerely,

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies  
Association of Marina Industries  
American Sportfishing Association  
Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (B.A.S.S.)  
BoatU.S.  
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation  
Marine Retailers Association of the Americas  
National Association of State Boating Law Administrators  
National Marine Manufacturers Association  
State Organization of Boating Access  
Trout Unlimited