



The Case for Moving the Detroit Boat Show to January in 2020.

On July 23, 2018 the North American International Auto Show announced its date change for 2020 to June, which opened the door for the Detroit Boat Show to move back to January dates. For many years the Detroit Boat Show had late January dates but as the Auto Show got bigger and the desire of the NAIAS to get farther away from the New Year holiday, the Detroit Boat Show got pushed further and further into February.

At the April 10th Boat Show Advisory Committee meeting there was a lengthy conversation by a cross section of exhibitors which included boat dealers, marina operators, dock companies, and accessory retailers, and MBIA staff. As you will see below, the pros and cons of a move back to January were thoughtfully and thoroughly discussed. In addition to the consideration of other boat show dates in Michigan and across the country which have an impact on our Detroit Boat Show Exhibitors, the Committee also considered winter breaks and Super Bowl Sunday dates.

Discussion highlights which supported the move into January included:

- Current February dates fall on the Winter Break for many SE Michigan schools, which means a large portion of the critical customer segment is out of town during the February Detroit Boat Show dates.
- Very few boat shows around the country are held in February. Most, especially the larger shows, are in January, giving dealers an added month of selling time.
- Current February dates overlap the Miami Boat Show and the Grand Rapids Boat Show, which were determined to be critical to Michigan dealers. January dates will overlap New York Boat Show, Toronto Boat Show, and the Cleveland Boat Show. These shows were considered less critical to Michigan dealers.
- Manufacturing challenges in the marine industry support getting orders into production as early as possible. The earlier show will help boat buyers in Michigan receive their boats in time for spring launch.
- Getting the DBS away from Autorama, which closely follows the Detroit Boat Show in February, will allow the MBIA to create an easier and less stressful move-in and move-out experience for the show's exhibitors.
- The Committee was also careful to assure the new dates would not fall on Superbowl Sunday. While the new dates may hit a playoff weekend, there should never be playoff games on both weekends of the show allowing options for attendance. Additionally, the televised time of the playoff games allows the time to do both.

At the end of the discussion the Committee made the recommendation to move the Detroit Boat Show into a January time slot, which would be in the best interest of the exhibitors and the show based on these factors.

The Committee reviewed the recommendation with the full MBIA Board at the April 19th Board Meeting. It was agreed that the dates suggested would be the best fit for the Detroit Boat Show and its exhibitors.

The announcement of the new dates to the MBIA membership in January resulted in some exhibitors expressing new concerns specifically in that:

- The 2020 dates will require some dealers to move straight from the Ultimate Fishing Show to the Detroit Boat Show, a hardship for staff moving boats.
- In January, people will not yet know how their tax returns will look and/or they have not yet received their annual bonus check – could affect purchasing
- Personal watercraft dealers are also snowmobile dealers and are extremely busy in January and may not have staff to do both events.
- Overlapping with other January shows, DBS may (or may not) lose some of the manufacturer booths to other shows around the country - however, we may gain others.

Sharing these new concerns with the MBIA Board, Boat Show Advisory Committee and other key exhibitors at the show, there continued to be significantly more support for the January date move than opposition to the move.

Recognizing there will always be some challenges in every scenario, there are still more pros than cons with the move to January dates. The consensus was to keep the January dates despite the added concerns.

Special requests were to:

1. Acquire a 3-year contract with Cobo Center to assure we do not move back to February should the Auto Show want to return (confuses consumers).
2. Assure the ad budget will allow for adequate communication of new dates to consumers.(MBIA is already communicating new dates 12 months out).

Cobo Center requested the preferred dates for the next five years.

MBIA has submitted:

2020, January 18–26
2021, January 16 -24
2022, January 15-23
2023, January 21-29
2024, January 20-28
2025, January 18-26

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