

March 22, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Room S-128, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-307, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Room S-128, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-307, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Shelby, Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Leahy, and Ranking Member Granger:

On behalf of the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA), I urge you to support the recreational boating industry's priorities for the fiscal year 2020 (FY 20) appropriations cycle. These programs are important to marine manufacturers and the entire recreational boating community; therefore, as the House and Senate Appropriations Committees prepare FY 20 appropriations legislation, we hope that you will fully consider these programs.

NMMA is the trade association for the U.S. recreational boating industry, representing nearly 1,300 marine businesses, including recreational boat, marine engine, and accessory manufacturers. NMMA members collectively manufacture more than 85 percent of the marine products sold in the U.S. Furthermore, the recreational boating industry has a significant impact on our nation's economy and in communities across the country, employing nearly 700,000 American jobs across 35,000 U.S.-based marine businesses.

The priorities highlighted in this request would enhance and maintain our nation's waterways, promote innovative technology to improve on-the-water safety, identify new revenue sources to increase access to and reduce user-conflicts on our public waters, educate boaters about harmful misfuelling at their local gas stations, and help restore vital ecosystems from the Florida Everglades to the Great Lakes.

Again, thank you for your consideration of these important programs, and we look forward to working with you to protect and enhance boating access, American manufacturing jobs, and local economies that depend on the recreational boating industry.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at [nvasilaros@nmma.org](mailto:nvasilaros@nmma.org) if you have any further questions or would like additional information.



Nicole Vasilaros  
Senior Vice President of Government Relations and Legal Affairs  
National Marine Manufacturers Association

## **Appropriations Priorities**

### ***Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS)***

#### **Department of Commerce**

##### **Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account (ORSA)**

On September 20, 2018, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) published the final ORSA report that illustrates the large economic impact of outdoor recreation. This report calculated that the outdoor recreation industry had a U.S. GDP contribution of 2.2 percent and annual gross economic output of \$734 billion in 2016 (the last available year of data). This economic contribution level is greater than other key economic sectors, including the mining, utilities, and chemical products manufacturing industries. In addition, with 4.5 million jobs, the outdoor recreation sector generates similar employment levels as other major job creators in the United States, including hospitals, transportation and warehousing, and educational services.

ORSA measures the size of the outdoor recreation economy and the link between outdoor recreation and the broader United States economy. Like other satellite accounts, ORSA was built on BEA's comprehensive supply-use framework. The supply-use tables provide a detailed look at the relationships among industries and how each industry contributes to Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

ORR members represent thousands of U.S. businesses that produce vehicles, equipment, gear, apparel, and services for the millions of Americans who enjoy our nation's parks, waterways, trails and outdoor spaces. The ORSA data is key to quantifying the economic impact of the outdoor industry, and we urge the Committee to include \$1.5 million in funding for ORSA in the final FY 19 Commerce, Justice, Science appropriations legislation.

The report marks a critical step forward for the outdoor recreation industry by formally recognizing its economic influence. The entire outdoor recreation community supports continued funding for this ORSA account, with additional detail for national and state economics. This data contains important indicators and guideposts for the Administration and Congress to consider in their policymaking.

**NMMA Request:****FY 19 Enacted:** \$1,500,000**FY 20 Request:** \$1,500,000**Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account (ORSA)**

As a complement to ORSA's existing work, NMMA also requests that the Committee direct the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to conduct an assessment to identify federal programs that directly support the public access and availability of outdoor recreation activities. In addition to identifying a top line number for how much of the federal government budget is spent to support outdoor recreation, such a study would also help advance outdoor recreation by identifying the specific programs, and their recent spending levels, that support the outdoor recreation economy.

**NMMA Request:**

**Report Language:** *The Committee appreciates the Department's analysis of the impact of outdoor recreation on the U.S. economy and provides \$1,500,000 to continue this work in fiscal year 2020. The Committee further expects the Department to continue working with the outdoor recreation industry, nongovernmental organizations, and other interested stakeholders to refine the national-level statistics and develop regional statistics. In addition, the Committee recognizes that a wide range of federal programs support the outdoor recreation sector. The Committee directs the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to conduct a study identifying the federal programs that directly impact the outdoor recreation sector, and such programs' spending levels over the previous 20 fiscal years, and report its findings to the Committee within 240 days of the date of enactment of this Act. Such programs include those that affect the management, access, and conservation of the nation's lands and waters. In preparing this study, GAO shall coordinate with the outdoor recreation industry, nongovernmental organizations, and other interested stakeholders.*

**Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (NOAA ORF, PAC funding)**

The National Marine Sanctuary System is an essential network of protected waters held in trust for all Americans. Consisting of more than 600,000 square miles of ocean, coasts, and Great Lakes, national marine sanctuaries conserve some of the Nation's most critical natural, historic, and cultural resources. They are home to millions of species, preserve our nation's maritime heritage, and promote access for exploration and world-class outdoor recreation. Sanctuaries are vital to maintaining the healthy ocean and Great Lakes ecosystems that support local economies. Investing in marine sanctuaries underscores the continuing ecological, historical, and recreational value of America's underwater national treasures and their associated economic impact.

The Sanctuaries Operations, Research and Facilities (ORF) account supports growth in community-based sanctuaries, conducts cooperative conservation science and research programs, and explores new technologies. ORF also conducts public education, outreach, and awareness efforts to show how sanctuaries can serve as a model for protecting marine ecosystems around the world and connect communities to their marine and Great Lakes wonders.

The Procurement, Acquisition, and Construction (PAC) account replaces vessels that are mission critical to operations, management, and enforcement. It also improves visitor centers, facilities and signage, and supports the Sanctuary Challenge Fund. The Fund finances significant projects and programs across the National Marine Sanctuary System to improve sanctuary visitor experiences and strengthen public engagement.

**NMMA Request:**

**Sanctuaries and Marine Protected Areas – Sanctuary Operations, Research and Facilities:**

**FY 19 Enacted:** \$55,500,000

**FY 20 Request:** \$57,000,000

**Marine Sanctuaries Construction- Procurement, Acquisition, and Construction (PAC) funding:**

**FY 19 Enacted:** \$2,000,000

**FY 20 Request:** \$8,500,000

***Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies***

**Department of the Interior**

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

The spread of harmful nonnative plants, animals, and other organisms threatens America's water habitats and has a detrimental economic impact for the industry, anglers, boaters, and local communities. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), managing these invasive species costs the U.S. economy an estimated \$13 billion annually. Coordination amongst federal and state agencies has its difficulties and given the significant impact that combating aquatic invasive species (AIS) has on the economy, it's important that GAO review current federal funding for AIS to ensure that funds are used effectively and efficiently.

Additionally, the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, initiated in 1950 at the behest of the boating and angling community, is a user fee-public benefit system that provides more than \$600 million annually for aquatic conservation and infrastructure projects. The majority of these funds are provided by the motorboat fuel tax and an excise tax on sport fishing equipment. The increased use of non-motorized vessels has caused conflicts at waterway access points and boat ramps, and funds paid for through the Sport Fish Restoration Program are being used to improve non-motorized access.

We request that the Committee direct the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to review the effectiveness of federal funding directed to state and local agencies for the purpose of addressing AIS, identify best practices for state and local agencies conducting decontamination and inspection, and provide recommendations for how federal funds could be used more efficiently to address AIS.

### **NMMA Request:**

**Report Language:** *The Committee directs the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to study the use of non-motorized vessels in each state and how the increased use of non-motorized vessels is impacting motorized and non-motorized vessel access, user conflicts at waterway access points, and the use of Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program funds to improve non-motorized access at waterway entry points. The Service shall, not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, report to the Committee its findings.*

## **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

### **EPA Misfueling Mitigation Program**

Recreational boat engines and other off-road vehicle and outdoor equipment products are only certified by the EPA to run on gasoline blended with up to 10 percent ethanol (E10) or less. Higher ethanol blends, such as gasoline blended with up to 15 percent ethanol (E15), destroy the engines in these products, leading to potentially dangerous maintenance issues, voided warranties, and costly repairs.

While the EPA recognizes E15 is an unsafe fuel option for millions of boats, other off-road vehicles, and outdoor power equipment engines, it underestimates the dire need for robust, effective misfuelling mitigation measures. Most consumers are unaware of the risks and assume all fuel sold at retail gas stations is safe for all their products. A recent study released by the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute shows misfuelling is on the rise, with more than 3 in 5 Americans mistakenly assuming that any gas sold at gas stations is safe for all of their products. Consumer education and safeguards at the point of sale are incredibly important to recreational boaters—out of the 142 million Americans who go boating each year, 95 percent own small, towable boats, and fill their boat’s engine at the local gas station.

The recreational boating industry continues to be concerned that the EPA has not implemented a successful, comprehensive Misfuelling Mitigation Plan, failing to adequately educate consumers on the effects and proper usage of E15. The current E15 pump label is severely inadequate and more robust outreach and research into improved misfuelling measures, such as effective labeling and additional education and pump safeguards, must be done to better protect consumers.

### **NMMA Request:**

**Report Language:** *The Committee is aware that consumers misfuel with E15 and higher ethanol grades of gasoline in engines not designed, approved, or warranted to use blends above 10 percent ethanol content (E10). Misfuelling can put consumers at risk, damage engines, void product warranties, and result in undue economic loss to consumers. The Committee, therefore, directs the Environmental Protection Agency to determine the efficacy of the Misfuelling Mitigation Plan and shall, not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, report to Congress its findings and a plan to improve the agency’s E15 misfuelling mitigation measures.*

## **Great Lakes Restoration Initiative**

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) works to protect and restore the Great Lakes through the prevention of aquatic invasive species (AIS), reduction of nutrient runoff that contributes to harmful algal blooms, and restoration of habitat to protect native species. The Great Lakes region is home to more than 3 million boaters, and GLRI is a crucial program to ensure the Great Lakes are fully protected.

### **NMMA Request:**

**FY 19 Enacted:** \$300,000,000

**FY 20 Request:** \$300,000,000

## ***Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies (E&W)***

### **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)**

#### **Operations and Maintenance (O&M)**

Low commercial use waterways are important not only to shipping interests, but also to the recreational boating community. Combining both forms of usage, these waterways can facilitate billions in economic output. Meanwhile, if maintenance of all “low use” projects were fully funded, USACE’s budget would be increased by less than \$200 million.

Many of these waterways serve as marine highways for the U.S. Marine Transportation System, linking the various ports, small communities, and marina businesses along the nation’s coastline. These waterways link natural deep-water sections of bays through a series of man-made channels, enabling both the safe passage of marine vessels and access to fishing grounds. Maintenance dredging of these waterways allows local sponsors to support the local and regional economies by maintaining and enhancing public navigation channels and inlets, boating access facilities, waterfront parks, and piers and special structures.

### **NMMA Request:**

#### **Army Corps Operations and Maintenance - Navigation Maintenance:**

**FY 19 Enacted:** \$23,900,000

**FY 20 Request:** \$60,000,000

#### **Army Corps Operations and Maintenance - Inland Waterways:**

**FY 19 Enacted:** \$40,000,000

**FY 20 Request:** \$60,000,000

#### **Army Corps Operations and Maintenance - Small, Remote, or Subsistence Navigation:**

**FY 19 Enacted:** \$54,000,000

**FY 20 Request:** \$60,000,000

## **Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program**

NMMA strongly supports adequate funding for the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan to reestablish the historic southerly flow of water from central Florida to Florida Bay. The repetitive discharges from the altered system to the state's coastal estuaries have caused significant harm to fisheries and their associated habitat. These impacts have significantly affected the sportfishing industry nationwide, which depends on Florida as the "Fishing Capital of the World" as an important component of its success.

NMMA advocates for base funding of at least \$200 million annually for Congressionally authorized restoration projects, including the Central Everglades Planning Project and Everglades Agricultural Area Storage Project, Indian River Lagoon South, Caloosahatchee C-43 Reservoir, Tamiami Trail Bridging, Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands, Broward County Water Preserve Area, Lake Okeechobee Watershed Project, C-111 South Dade Project, Picayune Strand Restoration Project, and Operations and Maintenance and Depreciation Obligations.

### **NMMA Request:**

**FY 19 Enacted:** \$67,500,000

**FY 20 Request:** \$200,000,000

## **Water Recreation Access Facilities Study**

The USACE is one of the nation's leading federal providers of outdoor recreation, with more than 400 lake and river projects in 43 states and management of 55,90 miles of shoreline and 3,748 boat ramps across the country. Currently, there is a lack of sufficient parking for vehicles with trailers and outdated ramp utilities, including paved roads, bathrooms, and trash receptacles. Insufficient parking and outdated ramps cause delays at boat ramps, sometimes lasting several hours.

We request that the Committee direct the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to study USACE maritime facilities, capacity, and maintenance to identify locations that need investment for new or additional boat ramps and updated parking areas and public facilities, which serve as the gateway to water recreation.

### **NMMA Request:**

**Report Language:** *The Committee directs the Government Accountability Office to study U.S. Army Corps of Engineers maritime facilities, capacity, and maintenance to identify locations in need of investment in new or additional infrastructure, including boat ramps, parking lots, and other public facilities.*

## **Beneficial Uses of Dredged Material Study**

Due to the naturally occurring process of sedimentation, over time, rivers, lakes, harbors, and bays can become filled with debris, sand, mud, silt, and other materials that reduce waterway depths, making them difficult to navigate and sometimes posing environmental hazards. Proper

dredging of these sediment materials plays a critical role in providing access to the recreational boating and fishing communities and maintaining clean and healthy waterways for local ecosystems.

USACE estimates that hundreds of millions of cubic yards of dredged materials need to be excavated each year from rivers, lakes, harbors, and bays across the country to keep the nation's waterways open for commercial and recreational use. In order to avoid the continued traditional landfill disposal of dredged materials, USACE should study alternative and recyclable solutions that deliver multiple economic and environmental benefits that add more value to local communities.

**NMMA Request:**

**Report Language:** *The Committee directs the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to study alternative and recyclable solutions for disposal of dredged materials that can provide communities with economic and environmental benefits. Upon completion of this study, the Corps is directed to provide recommendations for States and regions to encourage public-private partnerships for sustainable dredging projects.*