

Top Policy Priorities



Pressing policy issues at the federal level that require our community's full attention and advocacy efforts, include: recreation access and infrastructure, trade, supply chain challenges, recreational fishing, and conservation.

Trade and Tariffs

Marine manufacturers rely on free and fair trade, global supply chains, and a stable business environment to remain competitive. From Section 301 tariffs on imports from China to Section 232 tariffs on aluminum and subsequent retaliatory tariffs, marine manufacturers have been hit from all sides of the recent trade wars. The total value of recreational boats and engines exported from the U.S. in 2019 totaled \$2.1 billion, while exports to the E.U.—the industry's second largest international market—have decreased by more than 40% since 2018, following the E.U.'s 25% retaliatory tariff on U.S. boats and engines, which is set to increase to 50% on June 1.

- Eliminate the European Union's 25% retaliatory tariff on U.S. boats.
- End Section 232 tariffs on aluminum and steel imports.
- Strike a comprehensive agreement with China that eliminates Section 301 tariffs and protects American businesses.
- Secure a trade agreement with the U.K. that removes the 25% retaliatory tariff on U.S. boats and technical barriers to trade while addressing regulatory cooperation.

Recreation Access and Infrastructure

Fixing recreation infrastructure isn't just critical to boaters, it's critical to the U.S. economy. Outdoor recreation is a substantial and growing part of the U.S. economy, accounting for 2.1% of GDP, \$788 million in annual gross economic output, and supporting over 5 million U.S. jobs. Getting boaters out on the water is essential to our industry's success and doing so requires policy to bolster outdoor recreation infrastructure investments in the upcoming infrastructure package.

- Pass a major surface transportation bill to address critical recreation infrastructure needs, including the development of climate solutions to protect aquatic ecosystems, boating access, and marine businesses.
- Increase funding to support conservation and ensure critical infrastructure needs are met by reauthorizing the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund and establishing a Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP) dedicated USACE set-aside.
- Prioritize restoration and resiliency projects, such as modernizing boating infrastructure and access projects, and enacting the Providing Resources for Emergency Preparedness and Resilient Enterprises (PREPARE) Act.
- Establish incentives and resources to support manufacturing of electric, solar, and hydrogen fuel cell powered recreation products and alternative fuel charging infrastructure needed to support deployment.
- Identify opportunities to improve and modernize access through directing the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to conduct a public boating access survey to identify and assess conditions of all public boating access points to better determine where investments are needed to expand public boating access and grow the boating economy in local communities.
- Implement the Great American Outdoors Act.
- Implement sound permitting processes to remove barriers to recreation and enable infrastructure maintenance and improvements.



Supply Chain Challenges

Supply chain disruption, exacerbated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, threatens the success and expansion of the U.S. recreational boating industry — of which the vast majority are small businesses. In some instances, marine manufacturers have been forced to temporarily shut down operations as they are unable to shoulder massive cost increases caused by recent supply chain challenges.

The industry relies on a highly integrated supply chain, and continued disruption will threaten thousands of businesses and jobs, hindering outdoor recreation opportunities.

- Reverse regulations and legislation that restrain supply chain facilitation and international trade, including the 232 tariffs on steel and aluminum.
- Create new incentives to support American-made marine manufacturing.
- Support strategic investments in infrastructure and trade to alleviate congestion in the supply chain.
- Establish a multimodal freight office within the U.S. Department of Transportation to develop and implement a comprehensive national freight policy that mitigates risk of supply chain disruptions.

Conservation and Environment

Recreational boaters and anglers are the nation's original conservationists. Boaters and recreational boating businesses, including dealers, manufacturers and marinas, rely on clean water, healthy ecosystems and abundant fish populations. Combating the environmental challenges facing the entire recreational boating community—rising sea levels, ocean acidification, water pollution and more—requires action.

- Reauthorize and modernize the Sport Fish Restoration & Boating Trust Fund.
- Provide \$725 million for Everglades restoration and \$335 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, and \$85 million for the Chesapeake Bay Program.
- Increase funding to address critical water quality issues, including harmful algal blooms and marine debris.
- Stop and reverse the spread of aquatic invasive species through robust, targeted funding and improved coordination between federal agencies.
- Implement 30x30 protections that maintain reasonable and responsible access to recreation.
- Provide funding to research next generation marine propulsion systems and alternative fuels.

Recreational Fishing

Over 70% of all boat outings involve fishing, making recreational fishing a key asset to the recreational boating industry. Recreational anglers make a combined economic contribution of \$115 billion annually, supporting 828,000 American jobs. To ensure continued industry growth, recreational anglers rely on abundant access and healthy ecosystems.

In the past year, state fishing licenses sales increased 14% and revenues from the federal excise tax on fishing equipment increased 55%. These increases in fishing participation contribute greatly to conservation funding, of which recreational anglers and boaters are among the largest contributors—providing approximately \$1.5 billion annually through licenses sales, excise taxes and donations.

- Modernize and reauthorize the Magnuson–Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.
- Pass the Forage Fish Conservation Act to require federal marine fisheries managers to better account for the role of forage fish in the ecosystem.
- Establish a recreation advisory committee that advises the U.S. Department of Commerce on restoring marine ecosystems and improving access to national marine fisheries and sanctuaries.
- Enact the Drift Gillnet Modernization and Bycatch Reduction Act to phase in a ban on large mesh drift gillnets, which currently only operate off California.
- Implement 30x30 protections that maintain reasonable and responsible recreational fishing access.

