October 29, 2026

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Thune, Speaker Johnson, Minority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader Jeffries,

On behalf of the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA), I write to urge your leadership in advancing three critical legislative priorities that will strengthen America's recreational boating economy, protect public access to our nation's waterways, and support American manufacturing and small businesses: passage of the America the Beautiful Act, passage of a strong Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), and reauthorization of the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund.

Recreational boating and fishing are deeply rooted in America's heritage and remain powerful contributors to our nation's economic strength. Recreational boating alone generates $230 billion in annual economic activity and supports more than 812,000 American jobs across 36,000 businesses. Importantly, 95 percent of boats sold in the United States are manufactured domestically, and approximately 93 percent of boat builders are small businesses. These figures underscore the importance of policies that sustain American manufacturing, support local economies, and ensure families can continue enjoying our nation's waters.

Yet the infrastructure underpinning this economic activity is increasingly strained. Aging boat ramps, deteriorating marinas, deferred maintenance, and outdated policies threaten public access and discourage private investment. For manufacturers, marine businesses, and waterfront communities, these challenges have consequences that extend well beyond recreation. When Americans cannot safely and reliably access the water, local businesses lose customers, communities lose tourism revenue, and the broader recreational marine economy suffers.

As the 119th Congress enters its final months, there remains an important opportunity to build on the progress made this Congress and advance meaningful legislative priorities that will deliver lasting benefits.

America the Beautiful Act

Advancing the America the Beautiful Act (S. 1547) to reauthorize the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund is essential to ensuring our marine infrastructure is effective, accessible, and safe. Established through the bipartisan Great American Outdoors Act of 2020, the Fund has supported critical infrastructure repairs across all 50 states, improving access to public lands and waters while

addressing longstanding maintenance needs. With the Fund having expired in September 2025 and approximately $40 billion in deferred maintenance affecting national parks and public lands and waters, renewed congressional action is critical.

Water Resources Development Act
The bipartisan Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) prioritizes recreational boating access and modernizes federal water infrastructure. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) manages recreation facilities that receive approximately 269 million visits annually, including thousands of boat ramps and marina facilities. These sites are essential to recreational access and economic activity, yet outdated leasing arrangements, prolonged approval processes, and restrictions on reinvesting recreation fees can undermine their long-term viability. Commonsense reforms included in the Senate bill would reduce unnecessary administrative barriers, encourage responsible private investment, and help marina operators modernize facilities without compromising federal oversight.

Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund
Finally, NMMA urges the prompt reauthorization of the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund. For more than seven decades, this successful user-pay, public-benefit program has supported boating safety, fishery conservation, boating infrastructure, and public access improvements in all 50 states. Generating more than $750 million annually, the Trust Fund is financed primarily through taxes and fees paid by boaters, anglers, and the recreational marine industry. Boat builders in the U.S., marine engine manufacturers, marinas, boaters, anglers and our partners across the small business ecosystem of the marine industry are counting on uninterrupted investments in infrastructure and clean water. A swift reauthorization of the Trust Fund is paramount.

Together, these three legislative priorities offer Congress a meaningful opportunity to strengthen American manufacturing, improve public infrastructure, and protect access to our nation's waters. They represent complementary solutions to a shared challenge: ensuring that the infrastructure and conservation programs supporting recreational boating can meet the needs of today's Americans and future generations.

We respectfully ask that you work with your House and Senate colleagues to prioritize these measures. NMMA stands ready to serve as a resource as Congress works to deliver practical, bipartisan solutions that support American jobs, infrastructure projects, and thriving waterfront communities.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Sincerely,



Robyn Boerstling
Chief Advocacy Officer and Senior Vice President of Government Relations