

# Recreational Boating Association of Washington

## Policy Positions

*The policy positions listed below were approved by the RBAW Board on February 2, 2017. Note that the Board may update this information frequently.*

### **Recreation Resource Account:**

A key priority for RBAW is to leave this account to its dedicated purpose of developing and maintaining boating infrastructure. RBAW strongly opposes any effort to divert these funds from their intended purpose. If necessary, RBAW supports using general obligation bonds on a temporary basis to keep the RRA whole.

### **Marina Lease Rates:**

RBAW opposes new averaging or special individual rate calculations that would negatively impact boaters generally or yacht clubs specifically.

### **Watercraft Excise Tax:**

RBAW believes the tax is unfair to boaters. Since its inception, RBAW has vigorously opposed the Watercraft Excise Tax (WET) and any proposed increases. RBAW believes the WET should be repealed. Nonetheless, if State government wishes to allocate the revenue generated from this tax to *specific* programs, RBAW should be at-the-table for such discussions.

### **Boater Education:**

RBAW supports the mandatory boater education program in Washington State. RBAW will advocate and be involved in any proposals to improve the current boater education program and RBAW will oppose any effort that detracts from the current system.

### **Snake River Dam Removal:**

RBAW opposes the breaching or removal of any of the four dams on the Snake River. Removal would result in a detrimental impact on recreational boating, on already funded Boating Facilities Program developments and on Washington state's economy.

### **No-Discharge Zone:**

RBAW opposes a proposed Puget Sound no-discharge zone in that it is already illegal to dump black water and the change would eliminate the use of Federally-approved type 1 and type 2 marine sanitation devices.

### **Marine Tourism:**

RBAW supports changes to the cruising permit policy that would allow corporate-owned vessels visiting Washington State waterways to have the same rights as individual-owned vessels.

**Derelict Vessels:** RBAW supported extending the \$1 registration surcharge beyond its June 30, 2013 sunset date. However, RBAW believes commercial vessels need to pay more than presently required, for removal of larger derelict vessels.

### **Capitol Lake:**

RBAW supports the Olympia Yacht Club position to leave Capitol Lake a lake.

**Invasive Species:**

RBAW supports efforts to manage aquatic invasive species in general, and has agreed since 2007 to a surcharge to vessel registration to fund this program. RBAW suggests that other user groups should also contribute to AIS education and eradication efforts.

**Boating Under the Influence:**

RBAW is supportive of efforts to enforce BUI penalties, but is concerned about additional procedures that may impact the recreational boating experience. RBAW opposes tying BUI to an individual's automobile driver's license.

**Additional Boat Registration:**

RBAW opposes changes to the type of craft that need to be registered when the reason is primarily to increase fees paid to the State.

**PFD Wear:**

RBAW supports boating safety, but believes that State efforts to make PFD wear mandatory for all may not lead to the safety improvements that some proponents envision. RBAW would prefer to have standardized *national* efforts around PFD wear rather than piecemeal efforts at the state or local level.

**Big Tent Coalition:**

RBAW supports joining with other outdoor recreation interest groups as a way to strengthen the voice of these interests.

**Parks Funding:**

RBAW supports efforts to fund State Parks in large part from the General Fund and also is supportive of efforts to improve the Discover Pass to increase sales. RBAW would oppose additional user fees for Boaters' use of State Parks (see next policy)

**Additional / Increased Fees:**

RBAW opposes additional or increased fees on boaters. Data shows that boaters pay more than their fair share already. A 2010 recent independent JLARC (Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee) study indicates that recreational boating currently pays the State \$35M more in boating taxes and fees per biennium than boating receives in services from the State. RBAW supports efforts to have taxes and fees paid by boaters dedicated to boating programs.

**Shoreline Master Plan:**

RBAW opposes SMP directives and rules that impose additional fees or performance requirements for live-aboards on recreational vessels.

**Excessive Boardings:**

RBAW is supportive of efforts to minimize or eliminate stops, inspections, and boardings of recreational vessels, unless based on probable cause.

**DNR Shoreline leases:**

RBAW now has a seat-at-the-table in establishing a "no-surprises" approach for content of proposed DNR leases; and will monitor carefully that economically unfeasible requirements in the tabled "Habitat Conservation Plan" for overwater structures (not vetted by scientific verification and stakeholder review) do not re-appear as lease-requests.

**Lake Washington Ship Canal Bridge Openings:**

RBAW is supportive of "open-on-demand" as now authorized by USCG (except for rush-hours), and opposes going to a scheduled-opening timing, as this provides minimal improvement to vehicular traffic, and significant safety issues for transiting boaters.