

Summary: MD Legislative Bills Directly Affecting Boating or Marine Industry
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General Assembly finally over... CBYCA comes out a winner!

It wasn't easy, but CBYCA interests held its own as legislators struggled to balance a budget hit hard by revenue shortfalls and a looming recession. The 425th Session began January 9, 2008 and adjourned April 7, 2008. The General Assembly has 47 Senators and 141 Delegates elected from 47 districts, and a record number of 19 bills were introduced of interest to CBYCA. Legislators listened, shutting down most bills and passing others which were given a CBYCA thumbs up. Here's the short list of wins on the legislative front:

SB 7 / HB17: Task Force to Study the Boating Industry in Maryland-Extension of Life
Sponsored by Senator Astle & several House members; passed unanimously and approved by Governor in April with extension to 6.30.09; ref: Chapter 11

This is the task force on which Kay Brawley is presently serving, and which will deliver its findings and recommendations later in 2008. The task force is oriented towards finding ways to make the impact of Maryland laws and regulations treat both residential and visiting boaters fairly and make them more welcome on our waters, as well as promoting the marine trade industry. A report and analysis to the Committee on Fri., Feb 29 is available to Delegates on tax laws, reciprocity and enforcement activity from Maine to Alabama.

SB676/HB612: Property Tax Assessment-Commercial Waterfront Property
Sponsored by 7 Senators and 6 Delegates; passed unanimously 3/30.

This bill would provide for the assessment of commercial waterfront property based on its use instead of its market value for property tax purposes. It is intended to make it less likely that existing marinas would be forced by tax increases to sell to condo development or such other use that would eliminate the boating access currently provided. This is a Working Waterfront Commission bill supported through testimony by CBYCA, MTA and DNR. It is very similar to FL legislation based on use to protect boating access of its citizens.

Legislative Bills Regarding Chesapeake Bay Environment:

SB 104: Working Waterfront Commission-Reporting & Sunset Extension;
Passed unanimously and approved by Governor on 4.8.08; ref: Chapter 17

SB213/HB369: Chesapeake Bay 2010 Trust Fund & Nonpoint Source Pollution Fund;
Senate adopted 46-0; House passed with amendment 121-15

HB 973: Water Management Administration-Living Shoreline Protection Act of 2008;
Supported by CBYCA, DNR & MTA; Passed Senate: 44-0; House: 123-10

HB1056: Water Management Administration-Wetlands & Waterways Program Fees;
Passed Senate: 37-10; House: 126-12

HB1253: Chesapeake & Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area Protection Program;
CBYCA offered testimony on March 6 to protect recreational boating, waterfront homeowners, yacht club and marine businesses' waterway dependency. Passed Senate: 41-6; House: 119-15.

MD General Assembly homepage online ref. <http://mlis.state.md.us/>