

Legislative Update

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The New Jersey Legislature has started the second half of the legislative session. Senate and Assembly Committee hearing and voting sessions are scheduled through March. There will be a short recess in the month of April and the legislature will meet in May and June before recessing for the summer.

There are a number of bills we are tracking on behalf of the MTA/NJ and will be pursuing for the remainder of the session including:

Styrene Tax Update: As you are aware, a surcharge on emissions became law in July that in part dramatically impacted the marine manufacturers industry in New Jersey. To resolve this serious issue a meeting was organized with Assembly Budget Committee Chairman Lou Greenwald to discuss the impact the tax will have on boat building in the State. Assemblyman Greenwald has followed up that critical meeting with the introduction of legislation to relieve the boat building industry of the debilitating styrene tax. **Assembly Bill 3118** exempts the boat industry from the styrene tax and it has been referred to the Assembly Environment Committee for consideration. We will be working with Assemblyman Greenwald, staff and committee members on moving the legislation.

We are currently reviewing options for Senate sponsors. MTA/NJ members can assist this process by writing letters in support of **Assembly Bill 3118** to the Chairman and members of the Assembly Environment Committee. The MTA/NJ is drafting a sample letter that MTA/NJ members can send and will be available at www.mtanj.org along with legislator contact information. Members can click on the "About MTA/NJ" link and go to Governmental Relations –Legislative Alert.

Assembly Bill 3080: The bill would require that owners of all registered vessels carry liability insurance. The bill was recently released from the Assembly Financial Institutions Committee. I testified against the legislation on behalf of the MTA/NJ due to a number of concerns with the language in the bill as well as conflicts with the way policies are currently written. We will be meeting with the bill sponsor again to discuss our concerns and to seek possible amendments to the bill. There is no Senate Sponsor of the legislation at this time.

Assembly Bill 918: The bill would increase from 50 to 100 feet the distance a PWC must stay from boats, the shore line, docks or people in the water. The bill was released from the Assembly Law and Public Safety Committee recently.

Assembly Bill 2624: The bill would establish mandatory boat safety classes for all New Jersey boaters. The bill remains held in the Assembly at the request of the MTA/NJ in order to address amendments made in the Senate that weaken the standards requested by the Association.

Assembly Bill 3418: The bill provides for a “Lemon Law” for boats and marine products and establishes a consumer remedy. The bill which was scheduled to be heard last week in the Assembly Consumer Affairs Committee was held at our request. The sponsor had agreed to meet and we will be scheduling a meeting to discuss our concerns with the bill.

Senate Bill 2210: The bill changes the exemption from sales tax limitations for the sale of boats between an individual in New Jersey and an individual outside New Jersey. There is currently no sales tax for the sale of boats between individuals who reside in New Jersey, but there is a tax on people who reside outside of New Jersey. The bill strengthens the existing language on who may not qualify for an exemption from the tax. The bill was recently introduced and the MTA/NJ is currently reviewing the bill to determine its impact on the industry.