

Legislative Update

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The New Jersey Legislature has recently returned from their short Budget Recess and will be meeting through the end of June. The Legislature is expected to be on break through the summer and likely until past the November elections. The Session will continue after the election.

Unfortunately for members of the Marine Trades Association and recreational boaters and fishermen throughout the State, Assemblyman Robert J. Smith has decided to not seek reelection this year and will be retiring from the Legislature at the end of this Session. Assemblyman Smith has been the top boating advocate in the Legislature in recent years. While I am sure the MTANJ will be sorry to see him leave, we are grateful for his support and we intend to work closely with him on our issues during his remaining time in the Assembly.

There remain a number of bills we are currently tracking for the MTANJ:

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. Fortunately, we have been successful in delaying the implementation of the tax until July 15, 2005 while the Legislature considers legislation to repeal the tax. Assembly Bill 3667/Senate Bill 2124 was introduced to repeal the tax and movement on the legislation has been positive. Assembly Bill 3667 was passed unanimously by the Assembly in March and was referred to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee who are expected to act on the bill before the end of June.

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 MTANJ 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 was introduced in the Fall and has been held by the sponsor at our request.