

December 1, 2005

To: Wisconsin State Assembly

From: Peter T. Murray  
Executive Director  
Wisconsin Association of Lakes

Re: AB 248  
Boater Safety Training

The Wisconsin Association of Lakes has approximately 350 lake organizations as members, with approximately 100,000 shoreland property owners throughout the state belonging to one of those organizations. Our mission as an association representing these organizations is to work toward clean, safe, healthy lakes for everyone.

With more than 600,000 motorboats registered in Wisconsin, and with more than 3.7 million fishing days (data from US Government) in Wisconsin from boaters who reside in other states, our waterways are becoming more and more crowded. With the increased demands on lakes for space, accidents will also increase.

An article in the Green Bay Press Gazette on May 22, indicated that boating fatalities in Wisconsin increased from 17 in 2001 to 18 in 2002 to 19 in 2003 and 24 in 2004. 2005 already had 22 reported boating fatalities as compared to zero at this time last year. We understand many boating accidents may be caused by failure to realize unsafe conditions or by a lack of understanding of safe boating practices and boating regulations.

This bill would help reduce accidents from the above causes.

A public, high boating accident record would certainly deter some tourism dollars from Wisconsin, and certainly is harmful to the loved ones left behind by someone who dies in an accident that might have been prevented. We believe the extra effort required to obtain certification from first time boaters will be paid back many times over to the people of Wisconsin by reduced accidents and generally safer conditions on all lakes and rivers.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Wisconsin Association of Lakes, I recommend your adoption of this bill.