Ohio Marine Trades Association
and Government Advantage Group

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

APRIL 2023



Boating Economic Impact Report Released

Ohio BASE: 9,729 Recreational Boating Households		
	Motorized	Non-Motorized
State of Ohio Impact	$3,273,440,517	$384,140,196

On March 21, 2023, ODNR hosted a webinar presentation to release the findings of the much-anticipated boating economic impact study. The presentation was over an hour and half and provided a lot of important and interesting data. The presentation was recorded and available to watch. If you are interested in that, please let LEMTA know. This is the first wide scale economic impact study done on Ohio boating since 1998. In addition to studying the full economic impact, they also released a report studying the impact of Lake Erie, the Ohio River and Inland lakes. There is also a lot of data on the demographics of boaters. Much of the data throughout the report compares motorized to non-motorized watercraft impacts, experiences, and findings.

Key findings from the studies' executive summary include:

The economic impact of Ohio's boating industry in 2022 was $6.40 billion, accounting for 45,856 jobs.
- The economic impact of Ohio's Recreational Boating was $3.66 billion; 25,476 jobs.
- The economic impact of Ohio's Marine Trades industry was $2.75 billion; 20,380 jobs.

- $1.3 billion was the 2022 economic impact of Ohio-based Lake Erie recreational boating, 9,385 employed
  - 21.2% of boating households primarily boat Lake Erie; 26.8% include Lake Erie.
- $0.3 billion was the 2022 economic impact of Ohio-based Ohio River recreational boating, 1,992 employed.
  - 4.8% of boating households primarily boat the Ohio River; 7.7% include Ohio River.
- $2.5 billion was the 2022 economic impact of Inland boating, 14,706 employed.
  - 74% of boating households primarily boat Inland; 84.9% include Inland lakes, reservoirs, rivers, and streams.

Ohio Water Partnership

On March 22, 2022, LEMTA was represented at the annual meeting of Ohio Water Partnership. LEMTA is a supporting organization of the Partnership. There were a good number of lawmakers and representatives from the Governor's administration in attendance. Remarks were given by Senator Matt Dolan, ODAg Director Brian Baldridge and others. The event was hosted at the Ohio Chamber of Commerce offices. Also represented at the reception was the Lake Erie Foundation

State Budget Process

The first half of odd numbered years are dominated by debate on the state's biennial budget bill. The process starts with the Governor's proposal, which has been introduced as House Bill 33. The House is the first chamber to consider the proposal and is expected to make significant changes before passing the bill to the Senate for consideration. The process will culminate with a conference committee in June to craft a final bill for enactment.

In the Governor's State of the State address on January 31, 2023, DeWine highlighted his priorities for the budget. These continue and expand upon his priorities during his first term as Governor. Those priorities

include children's initiatives like his student wellness and success funds and a fair school funding formula. He is also continuing his priorities regarding water quality through the H2Ohio programs and funds. The budget includes funding for H2Ohio programs that will increase focus on the water quality of Ohio's rivers.

Line items of interest to BAO are as follows:

7086 739401 Watercraft Operations	$ 29,805,719	$ 29,405,719
7086 725414 Waterways Improvement	$ 6,195,948	$ 6,170,948
5TD0 725615 Parks and Watercraft Vehicles	$ 9,636,500	$ 6,415,000
GRF 725505 Healthy Lake Erie Program	$ 955,429	$ 1,021,109
5140 725606 Lake Erie Shoreline	$ 1,819,849	$ 1,858,936
4U60 725668 Scenic Rivers Protection	$ 100,000	$ 100,000
GRF 235402 Sea Grants	$ 308,228	$ 317,474

H2Ohio Specific Appropriations by agency:

Ohio Department of Agriculture:	$ 69,018,000	$ 69,114,000
Lake Erie Commission:	$ 132,000	$ 132,000
ODNR:	$ 53,050,000	$ 53,050,000
Ohio EPA:	$ 31,350,000	$ 31,350,000

The budget also proposes a new Federal Grants Fund. Below is the line item for that as well as the implementing language.

Sec. 1546.24. There is hereby created in the state treasury the parks and watercraft federal grants fund. The fund shall consist of federal funds received by the department of natural resources for purposes of this section and any other money credited to the fund. The chief of the division of parks and watercraft shall use money in the fund for parks and watercraft projects approved by the director of natural resources.

3IK0 7256A1 Parks and Watercraft Fed Grants	$ 18,820,473	$ 16,548,566

Section 343.25. On July 1, 2023, or as soon as possible thereafter, the Director of Budget and Management shall transfer $9,410,237 cash from the Oil and Gas Well Fund (Fund 5180) to the Parks and Watercraft Federal Grants Fund (Fund 3IK0). On July 1, 2023, or as soon as possible thereafter, the Director of Budget and Management shall transfer $16,051,500 cash from the Oil and Gas Well Fund (Fund 5180) to the State Park Maintenance Fund (Fund 5TD0).

Policy Changes:

The budget proposes a couple of policy changes. LEMTA has reviewed these changes and did not flag any concerns. They are summarized as follows:

- Removes floatation device designation list from 1547.25
- Amends requirements for powercraft to carry fire hydrants (1547.27)
- Allows 60 days to transfer title, as opposed to 30 days (1548.03)
- Changes what a registrar issues a watercraft trailer from a "placard" to a "license plate" (4503.311)

Transportation Budget

The legislature is making relatively quick work of the transportation budget, House Bill 23, as that must be passed by the end of March. This budget generally sets the roads, highways and public transportation funding for the next 2 fiscal years. This is funded with the gas tax revenue and federal funds. There are no changes to code section 5735.051 where gas tax distributions are specified, including the seven-eighth percent to the Waterways Safety Fund is specified. So, under the current version of the bill, that fund is protected. HB 23 was favorably passed by the Ohio House by a vote of 74-21 and unanimously passed by the Ohio Senate. The Senate had briefly considered a proposal to increase the speed limit on certain roads, but it was quickly removed from the bill after significant opposition from the Governor, members of the Traffic Safety Council and others. The House did not accepted the changes made by the Senate, sending the legislation to a conference committee for final deliberations.

Under the Influence of Marijuana Bill

Senator Nathan Manning (R) has re-introduced legislation, Senate Bill 26, to make changes to the offense of operating a vehicle or watercraft under the influence of marijuana. The bill would change THC thresholds from a hard standard to instead "evidentiary standard" to be considered by courts. According to the sponsor testimony given on the proposal in 2021, this change would allow impairment to be judged more fairly. Under the medical marijuana program, how the state currently measures marijuana/THC in the system, could mean those with a medical marijuana card could almost never operate a vehicle as the component measured in the current OVI laws can stay in a person's system for up to a month.

Boating Safety Legislation Re-Introduced

Senator Kirk Schuring (R) has re-introduced LEMTA supported legislation, Senate Bill 7. This legislation does two important things.

1. Designates April as "Powerboat Safety Month". Promotion of this month would focus on the dangers of carbon monoxide poison.
2. Increases the maximum boating safety education grants administered by ODNR from $30,000 to $60,000.

This legislation is pending in the Senate Veterans and Public Safety Committee.

Retail Cash Option Bill

Senator Bill Blessing has introduced Senate Bill 38 regarding retail establishments. This legislation would require retailers who complete in person transactions to allow customers to pay with cash. The bill does provide for some exemptions including entertainment venues with a seating capacity of 10,000 or more

Youth Employment Bill Passes Senate

Senator Tim Schaffer (R) has reintroduced Senate Bill 30 regarding youth employment. The bill would allow those under 16 to be employed after 7pm during school year. It would state that with parent or guardian's permission, those under 16 could work until 9pm. The Ohio Senate has already favorably passed SB 30 by a vote of 25-7 and will now be considered by the Ohio House of Representatives.

Motor Fuel Tax Legislation

Senator Steve Huffman has introduced Senate Bill 48 regarding the tax on diesel fuel from the current 47 cents per gallon to 38.5 cents per gallon. This would align the diesel rate to that of gasoline. In a previous transportation budget, the legislature approved a gas tax increase, and also bifurcated the rate between diesel and gasoline. In the previous General Assembly, Senate Huffman has introduced legislation to revert to the pre-increase rate for all fuel, but this version of the legislation only addresses those fuels other than gasoline.

Minimum Wage Legislation

As is the case every General Assembly, legislation has been introduced to increase Ohio's minimum wage. This year it is House Bill 96. HB 96 is sponsored by Representatives Dontavius Jarrells and Ismail Mohamed. Under the bill the minimum wage would increase $1 per year until it reaches $15 in 2028, after that the rate would increase based on inflation.