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Massachusetts Marine Trades Association Workforce Solutions

Amendment Passes in the 2025/2026 MA State Budget

Recently, Governor Maura Healey signed the 2026 state budget, which included **$150,000** in funding for workforce development and career technical education initiatives within the recreational boating industry. This funding will continue the initiatives and progress that the Massachusetts Marine Trades Association (MMTA) has made to help meet the workforce challenges within the industry.

The funds were introduced via budget amendments sponsored in the Senate by Senator Patrick O'Connor of the Plymouth and Norfolk District, and in the House by Representative Jessica Giannino, of the 16th Suffolk District, joined in leadership by Senator Paul Feeney, and Representative Steven Xiarhos, the four co-chairs of the 60-plus member Legislative Boating Caucus.

The MMTA would like to express our appreciation to Senators O'Connor and Feeney and Representatives Giannino and Xiarhos for their leadership on this budgetary funding. We would also like to thank the entire Legislative Boating Caucus for their continued support of the recreational boating industry in Massachusetts. As well, we thank the six members of the 2026 Budget Conference Committee: Chairman Aaron Michlewitz, Representative Ann-Margaret Ferrante, Representative Todd Smola, Chairman Michael Rodrigues, Senator Joanne Comerford, and Senator Patrick O'Connor. Last, but not least, we thank Governor Healey for signing the final budget for the state and supporting workforce solutions within our industry.

"As a State Senator representing coastal communities, I hear all too often about the challenges and limitations faced by the recreational boating industry. This industry has long supported our local economies and way of life, now it's our turn to support them" said Senator Patrick M. O'Connor (R-Weymouth.) "This crucial funding for workforce development and career technical education initiatives will open doors for the next generation of experienced maritime workers, aiding in substantial business growth, while also consistently preserving maritime traditions across the Commonwealth."

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Funding received by the state is utilized to support schools providing training within the recreational boating industry. Whether through existing or new programs, MMTA's goal is to help the many educational facilities that train future leaders within the recreational boating industry. Recognizing the significance of workforce training in the industry and to highlight the need for new employees, the MMTA, working with their educational trust, has also created various data points for the industry, including a school overview project and a recent workforce wage and benefits study, which can be found on our primary job/career site – **www.massboatingcareers.com**

Additional funding is utilized to:

- Provide financial assistance for employee training.
- Provide financial assistance, Tools of the Trade funding.
  ***This program provides gift cards for new or existing employees to help build their toolboxes to help in their current positions within the industry here in Massachusetts.*
- Continue marketing outreach and development to connect current and future workers with available jobs, such as through **www.massboatingcareers.com** and MMTA's workforce videos.

Representative Jessica Giannino (16th Suffolk District) said, "The recreational boating industry is a vital part of our coastal economy, supporting thousands of good-paying jobs and creating career opportunities for the next generation of skilled workers. This funding will ensure we can continue to invest in workforce development, expand access to technical training, and strengthen the pipeline of talent needed to keep this industry thriving. I'm proud to join my colleagues in championing this initiative and grateful to the Massachusetts Marine Trades Association for their partnership and leadership."

The recreational boating industry in Massachusetts has an economic impact of approximately $5 billion and employs just under 20,000 men and women in the state. Here in Massachusetts, there remain hundreds—if not thousands—of unfilled positions within the industry. We have jobs and careers; we need people to fill them. This amendment will go a long way in continuing to help MMTA in its efforts on workforce solutions here in Massachusetts.

*Established in 1964, the **Massachusetts Marine Trades Association** (MMTA) is the non-profit statewide representative body for approximately 1,000 marine trades businesses in the Commonwealth that employ approximately 20,000 men and women. The mission of the Association is to further the interests of the marine trades and the boating public through the promotion of boating, participation in legislation, and professional improvement programs.*