

NATIONAL BOATING SAFETY ADVISORY COUNCIL

**April 1-2, 2011
Arlington, Virginia**

Resolution Number 2011-87-02

SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTARY SAFETY STANDARDS

WHEREAS, for over 50 years, the marine industry, through standards development groups like the American Boat and Yacht Council (ABYC), has engaged in the research and development of voluntary safety standards for recreational boats. These voluntary standards are more quickly developed, complement and, in many cases, supplement the mandatory regulations promulgated by the United States Coast Guard. For example, ABYC has developed voluntary standards governing electrical wiring and ignition protection on outboard and diesel powered boats while similar USCG regulations are limited to gasoline inboard boats only. Similarly, the ABYC voluntary standard governing occupant capacity is more conservative and inclusive than its USCG regulation counterpart; AND

WHEREAS, federal regulations pertaining to manufacture of recreational boats address only twelve limited areas including manufacturer certification, identification of boats, display of capacity information, safe loading, safe powering, flotation, electrical systems, fuel systems, ventilation, start-in-gear protection, navigation lights and backfire flame control. Regulatory experts estimate it takes a minimum of five years for a proposed boating safety regulation to become federal law; AND

WHEREAS, voluntary standards development address issues of strategic concern to the USCG, and outside the areas covered by existing regulation. These areas include those that address falls overboard prevention, steering, shift and throttle improvements, collision avoidance technologies, propeller strike avoidance, and emerging electrical and electronic systems. Voluntary standards have been enacted in less than one year; AND

WHEREAS, the National Marine Manufacturers Association estimates that approximately 90% of boats sold in the United States are designed and constructed in accordance to voluntary standards in addition to the federal regulations; AND

WHEREAS, the Strategic Plan of the National Recreational Boating Safety Program for 2012-16, for the first time recognized the valuable role filled by voluntary standards to enhance and accelerate boating safety through the inclusion of Objective 7.4, *Conduct and Support Research to Identify New Products, New Designs or New Safety Standards that would Reduce Boating Injuries and Deaths*; AND

WHEREAS, in 1995, the Congress in enacting the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995, (public law 104-113, 15 U.S.C. 272 note) recognized the importance of technical standards developed by voluntary consensus standards bodies and required the use of such standards to the extent practicable by Federal agencies and encouraged Federal agency representatives to participate in ongoing standards

NATIONAL BOATING SAFETY ADVISORY COUNCIL

**April 1-2, 2011
Arlington, Virginia**

development activities. On February 18, 1998, the Office of Management and Budget revised Circular A-119 to reflect these changes made in law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the National Boating Safety Advisory Council, meeting in regular session in Arlington, VA, on April 2, 2011, recommends the USCG continue to support voluntary safety standard development through participation by USCG staff in standard development activities and inclusion of Voluntary Standards Development Support as a specifically identified Area of Interest in its annual non-profit Grant Announcement at least through FY 2016, the final year of the current Strategic Plan.

James P. Muldoon, Chairman
National Boating Safety Advisory Council