April 8, 2020

The Honorable Larry Hogan, Chair  
The Honorable Andrew Cuomo, Vice Chair  
National Governors Association  
444 North Capitol Street, Suite 267  
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Governors Hogan and Cuomo:

The Boat Owners Association of the United States (BoatU.S.) is the nation’s largest membership association of recreational boaters with close to 700,000 member nationwide. Our members enjoy this family-friendly activity on all types of water around the country, using a wide range of sizes and styles of boats.

BoatU.S. fully supports the measures states are undertaking to address the COVID-19 pandemic. Recognizing the unprecedented challenges we collectively face, BoatU.S. urges all states to ensure any limitations and exceptions concerning recreational boating activity be consistent between all modes of recreation. Any boating activity (from paddling and powerboating to sailing and fishing) that meets CDC social distance guidelines should be treated similar to all other authorized outdoor activities (e.g., walking, hiking, bicycling, golfing, hunting, climbing, motorcycling).

For many Americans, getting out on a boat is their primary form of recreation. In this time of crisis, it can be even more important as we are all encouraged to head outdoors. As boating can be done alone or with immediate household members, and in some cases, potentially by never leaving one’s property (e.g., boating from a home dock or boatlift), we believe the risk from COVID-19 is minimized. Limiting one type of outdoor recreation while others of a similar nature are permitted can lead to confusion in the recreational boating community.

We also call your attention to situations where the use of a recreational boat is a necessity for everyday life. A number of individuals live aboard their boats on moorings, utilizing smaller craft to obtain food and travel for other permitted purposes. Others use their boat docked at a commercial marina as their residence. There are also situations where a boat must be moved from dock—such as from a marina to a private residence. Additionally, boaters are now returning home from long cruises, potentially transiting several states’ waters. Vessel maintenance, repair, fuel and transient boating activities need to continue. We strongly urge all states to allow the maximum flexibility for such activities.

Thank you for hearing our concerns about recreational activity consistency and parity when it comes to recreational boating. As we are the nation’s advocate for recreational boat owners, we stand ready to work with you to give recreational boaters in every state appropriate guidance.

Sincerely,

Chris N. Edmonston  
Vice President, BoatU.S. Government Affairs