

May 12, 2021

The Honorable Marco Rubio
United States Senate
284 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Joseph Morelle
United States House of Representatives
1317 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Angus King
United States Senate
133 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Bergman
United States House of Representatives
566 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joni Ernst
United States Senate
730 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Julia Brownley
United States House of Representatives
2262 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ron Wyden
United States Senate
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Pete Stauber
United States House of Representatives
461 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Sharice Davids
United States House of Representatives
1541 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senators Rubio, King, Ernst, Wyden, and Representatives Morelle, Bergman, Brownley, Stauber, and Davids:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write to thank you for introducing the *Providing Resources for Emergency Preparedness and Resilient Enterprises (PREPARE) Act*, landmark bipartisan, bicameral legislation that would allow small businesses to access much-needed capital to invest in disaster-resilient infrastructure. The PREPARE Act would allow the Small Business Administration to make low-interest, fixed-rate loans of up to \$500,000 to small businesses to invest in their properties to protect facilities, real estate and contents from natural disasters. We applaud your leadership in spearheading this proposal that would create an integral tool for building more resilient recreation access, protecting vulnerable communities, and rebuilding local economies.

Led by the recreational boating industry, the outdoor recreation economy is a major contributor to the U.S. economy, accounting for 2.1% of GDP, \$788 billion in economic output, and 5.2 million American jobs. The role of recreational boating in our economy has only grown more significant as Americans flocked to new outdoor activities amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, with

sales of new powerboats in the U.S. increasing last year by an estimated 12% compared to 2019, reaching a 13-year high. Over 44,000 new boat buyers entered the market between March and June 2020, representing 10% year-over-year growth.

While this rise has showcased the popularity of such activities as a safe and fun way to spend time with loved ones, it has also illuminated one of the most pressing issues facing the industry: the need for resilient infrastructure that protects recreation access and marine businesses and is adaptable to a rapidly changing environment. Given that a majority of public recreation access infrastructure is already in need of significant maintenance and modernizations, our aging access points and facilities are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. From rapidly changing water levels to increased frequency and intensity of flooding events and natural disasters in coastal and inland waterway areas, outdoor recreation infrastructure and small businesses in the recreation sector need bolstered resilience.

Small businesses in the outdoor sector depend on robust infrastructure to be able to make their living. Small businesses in rural, vulnerable, areas often face the brunt of natural disasters like flooding, wildfires, hurricanes, earthquakes, and tornados, leaving them damaged and unable to operate. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), roughly **40-60 percent of small businesses never reopen following a disaster.**

At a time when Congress and the Administration are working towards getting more Americans back to work and rebuilding the nation's economy, it is essential that resources are put in place to fortify already struggling small businesses and communities from the added damages of flooding events and other impacts from climate change. Providing relief for small businesses that will allow them to proactively invest in resilient infrastructure is an important part of the nation's economic recovery as well as a larger portfolio of investment in climate resilient roads, bridges, shorelines, and recreation infrastructure to protect our communities from more frequent flooding and storm damage that have cost the U.S. over \$800 billion in the last decade. Studies have shown that investing in resilient infrastructure saves taxpayers \$6 for every dollar spent. Implementing a mitigation loan program will help small businesses lessen the damage, saving millions of dollars in potential losses.

On behalf of our members, we thank you for prioritizing small businesses supporting the boating economy, and stand ready to work with you to ensure passage of this key legislation that will better enable the thriving outdoor sector to get Americans back to work and revive local economies across the country.

Sincerely,

Association of Marina Industries
Lake of the Ozarks Marine Dealers Association
Maine Marine Trades Association
Marine Industries Association of Palm Beach County, Inc.
Marine Industries Association of Southwest Florida & Tampa Bay
Marine Industries Association of the Treasure Coast
Marine Industry Association of Central Florida, Inc.

MarineMax
Marine Retailers Associations of the Americas
Marine Trades Association of Maryland
Marine Trades Association of New Jersey
Massachusetts Marine Trades Association
Michigan Boating Industries Association
Missouri Marine Dealers Association
Mount Dora Boating Center & Marina
National Marine Manufacturers Association
New England Marine Trades Association
Northwest Marine Trade Association
Rhode Island Marine Trade Association