



Marine business representatives from across Canada traveled to Parliament Hill to discuss important issues facing our industry.

Industry Voices Concerns at 2nd Recreational Boating Day on the Hill

Making progress on last year's groundwork, Canadian recreational marine industry representatives returned to Parliament Hill in Ottawa, Ontario in early May to participate in this year's Recreational Boating Day on the Hill. The annual event enabled two-dozen key recreational marine delegates from across the country to hold meetings with numerous Members of Parliament and policy makers.

For the second consecutive year, the event was

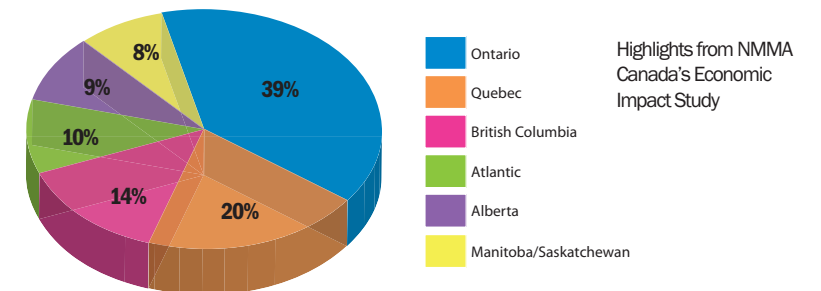
organized by the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) Canada with the assistance of Global Public Affairs, a Canadian government relations and lobbying organization. Last year, the association's mission was to raise awareness among Canada's elected officials of the significance of the recreational marine industry, which employs an estimated 67,000 people according to NMMA Canada.

"I think we did very well," describes Sara Anghel, NMMA Canada Executive Director. "We definitely had more meetings with Members of Parliament this year. We went in last year talking about whom we are and not much more than that. This year, we approached the meetings with specific asks and felt like our pressure made an impact. The MPs who saw us for the second year in a row were eager to assist us and we felt like they have connected

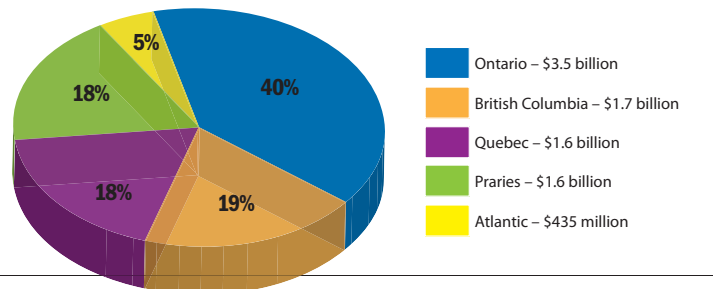
with us and the industry."

Helping to ensure the concerns of its members were heard, NMMA showed up to its meetings with its recently released Economic Impact Study, which highlights by region the \$8.9 billion revenues and \$5 billion GDP impact generated by recreational boating in 2012. With the aid of the numbers outlined in the study, NMMA Board Members and the marine trade association representatives felt that their individual concerns better resonated with those who could potentially support or

Boating Participation by Region



Total Industry Revenues by Region





(from left) Al Donaldson, Boating Ontario; Cameron Taylor, BOATsmart!; and Graham Lacey, Boating Ontario sit down with Mike Wallace, MP for Burlington, Ontario.



(from left) Vic Toews, Minister of Public Safety, and Merv Tweed, MP Brandon/Souris, Manitoba, meet with Patricia Nelder, Executive Director of the Atlantic Marine Trades Association and Jean-Francois Rioux, Assistant National Manager – Outboard and Special Markets for Yamaha Motor Canada.



NMMA Canada board members and marine trade association representatives met with several MPs throughout the day – including David Sweet (center), MP for Ancaster/Dundas/Flamborough/Westdale, Ontario. (from left) Tom MacNair, Brunswick Boat Group; Cameron Taylor, BOATsmart!; David Sweet; Boating Ontario's Al Donaldson and Graham Lacey.

directly influence resolutions for those issues.

"Atlantic Canada information from the Economic Impact Study was presented to the PEI MPs," says Patricia Nelder, Executive Director for Atlantic Marine Trades Association. "According to the new study, despite having only five percent of the Canadian population, Atlantic Canada represents 12 percent of the Boating Industry in Canada."

Brian Milligen Director of Sales for Mustang Survival and Vice-Chair NMMA Canada was on the team that met with Jasbir Sandu, an MP from Surrey-North, BC; Ron Cannon MP for the Kelowna-Lake Country, BC; Hélène LeBlanc an MP for La-Salle-Émard, Quebec; and former Liberal MP and Montréal Mayor candidate, Denis Coderre. "They were very beneficial meetings and the MPs were attentive and engaged," says Milligen. "They asked a lot of questions and listened very well. This event allows us as an industry to reach out and make them aware of who we are and what we're doing. We are a \$9-billion dollar industry that they really don't

know much about."

Milligen and his team arrived at their meetings with specific discussion topics in mind. "For us there are some key issues. In general, we want to make sure that people can have access to the water," explains Milligen. "The other issue that's really critical is the harmonization of the standards and tariffs. There are some things that businesses in the United States do not have to pay that we do. There could be as much as 10-percent difference in tariffs on material that we import into Canada versus the tariff on the same material in the United States. We manufacturer on both sides of the border, so we could have products that are exactly the same selling for more in Canada than in the US because of this differential in tariffs – 10 percent is a lot of money. Harmonization of Canadian/US standards is a significant issue for our whole industry. If we end up with a more ex-

pensive product in Canada, it limits our exposure to more customers. We believe the MPs can see that our industry, which employs 67,000 people across the country and sells 100,000 new and used boats each year, accounts for a fairly sizeable tax base. Our hope is that they recognize boating is a family sport, and that having happy healthy families is important for a healthy happy country."

Michael Swetz, Dock Edge's General Counsel and NMMA Board Member, says his team met with Jonathan Aitchison, Policy Advisor Office of the Minister of Industry. "He took a great liking to our industry and was very interested," recalls Swetz. "He acknowledged some of the issues we brought up, including trade issues. Aitchison mentioned they're looking at specific types of incentive programs for industries such as ours. We'll be following up with him to provide



David Tilson, MP for Dufferin/Caledon, Ontario speaks with Sara Anghel, NMMA Canada's Executive Director, at the post-meeting reception held at East Block Courtyard on Parliament Hill.



(from left) Sara Anghel, NMMA Canada; Senator Joseph Day (Saint John-Kennebecasis), Senator Gerald Comeau (Nova Scotia); and Donald Dubois, NMMA Canada.



Ray Boughen (left), MP of Palliser, Saskatchewan meets Jim Flood, representative for the Mid-Canada Marine and Powersports Dealers Association (MMPDA).

Reaping Results

Three weeks after Recreational Boating Day on the Hill, Dan Albas, Member of Parliament for Okanagan-Conquihalla, BC, made reference to past meetings with NMMA Canada during a debate on Bill S-12, which Albas said is designed to simplify trade regulations for Canadian industries. "For a Member of Parliament mention us in the House of Commons regarding a bill, to me that's an indicator that we're having huge success," says Anghel. "We have been mentioned before [in the House of Commons] through members statements that we were on the Hill to visit MPs, but not directly with something so tangible that would help our membership."

Looking forward, Anghel's long-term goal is to gradually increase the scale of Recreational Boating Day on the Hill. She says part of that depends on the availability of Members of Parliament to meet with industry members. "We have a fair presence currently at about 20 to 25 people coming to the Hill," she explains. "My goal would be for us to increase to say 30 to 35 meetings and then go out to the industry to see who we needed there to build additional momentum."

Meanwhile, Anghel believes the industry needs to vigilantly monitor several important issues where some progress seems to already have been made. Case in point, Parks Canada announced in May that it would freeze lockage fees on Canada's historic canals for three years after earlier proposing significant hikes. "We need to continue to monitor the Parks Canada issue about the hours of operation of the locks and what we can do as an industry to help Minister Peter Kent (Environment Minister) and the government to address the issue of the fees for the locks. It was a huge success through our efforts and the meetings we had on Parliament Hill and prior work with Barry Devolin (MP for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes, Ontario). The government heard us and the seeds were sown. We need to be proactive as an industry to look at what happens beyond the three years. It's our duty to help the government with a solution to that."

Anghel says NMMA Canada will continue to work on the issue of regulatory cooperation between Canada and the US. The association is planning next year's Recreational Boating Day on the Hill for sometime in May.



NMMA Canada Board of Directors 2013 (from left): Roy Baird, Power Boating Canada, Adrian Rushforth, Mercury Marine, Ab Gaznavi, Honda Canada Inc., Donald Dubois, Princecraft Boats, Cameron Taylor, BOATsmart! Canada, Marc Duhamel, Legend Boats, Tom MacNair, Brunswick Corporation, Sara Anghel, NMMA Canada, Jean Francois Rioux, Yamaha Canada, Fred Lachlan, Volvo Penta and Brian Milligen, Mustang Survival.

more stats about our industry's economic impact and how we can further help him stay informed about our issues so he can help us on the industry side and economic side. We talked about trade barriers and how we can make it easier to import raw materials and export product. We talked about funding for innovation, because there are a lot of marine companies involved in making boats and accessories. He was taken back by the fact that our industry employs 67,000. He said it's comparable to the aerospace industry, which has a lot of attention at the moment. He suggested that whatever they're trying to accomplish for the aerospace industry could potentially be applied to the marine industry because they're about the same size."

In addition to national issues such as water access and trade regulations, regional hot topics tabled by the marine trade associations in attendance included waterway user fees, marina expansion efforts and dredging support for marina operators on Georgian Bay.

"Our meeting was reasonably good," said Boating Ontario's Executive Director, Al Donaldson, after exiting a meeting with Mike Wallace, MP for Burlington, Ontario. "He acknowledged the issue about water levels was on the radar of senior people in Ottawa. He also advised us to be more cognizant of getting the marine caucus much more aware of the activities and value of recreational boating. At the present time, the marine caucus is 100 percent focused on commercial aspects and very little with recreational. He advised us that the best way we should increase

the awareness of recreational boating among the caucus is through our local MPs."

"I brought up the issue of docking facilities with Steven Fletcher (Minister of State - Transport)," says Jim Flood, Board Member with the Mid-Canada Marine and Powersports Dealers Association. "He's familiar with the lakes that I was talking about the docking service problems. He says it's a problem all across the country and not just mid-Canada. We need to get the government behind helping marinas that want to expand their docking facilities. I also brought up that same issue with Merv Tweed (MP for Brandon-Souris, Manitoba). Mr. Tweed was very aware of the problem and because the lake he is personally on has the issue. He is aware of some of the difficulties that some of the marinas are facing. He was quite surprised by the dollars being generated by our industry and the number of manufacturers in Manitoba in particular."

Several delegates came from their meetings with helpful suggestions on how the recreational marine industry can improve its lobbying efforts in the future. "Mr. Wallace made suggestions on how we can better state our cases to stakeholders," says Graham Lacey, President of Boating Ontario's Board of Directors. "The profile of the average boater is a little misunderstood as being big boaters with lots of money. In reality, they're typically young families with smaller boats – not high dollar value. That's not necessarily the perception among the public. We need to do a better job of presenting that profile of the average boater." ■