



City of San Francisco's Effort Stops Latest Harbor and Watercraft Revolving Fund Raid

Brad Gross, Harbor Master San Francisco Marina

Score one in the win column for the City of San Francisco and more importantly, score a big win for the Department of Boating Waterways. Our efforts, working with a score of boating associations, trade groups and California's recreational boaters, successfully defeated SB 1127, the Salmon Relief Bill.

SB 1127, introduced by Senators Chesbro (D, Arcata) and Aanestad (R, Grass Valley) recommended low and no interest loans and grants for the commercial fishermen and related business effected by the poor salmon fishing season this year. Good in concept, but the bulk of the funding was earmarked to come from the Harbor and Watercraft Revolving Fund. This is the same fund that finances all those badly needed renovations, new construction loans and launch ramp grants- and yes, the San Francisco Marina Renovation Project.

The funds for the HWRF come from taxes paid at the pump by recreational boaters. Commercial fishermen do not pay into the HWRF when they purchase commercial diesel.

Early in the process, working with our lobbyist, Steve Wallach from Lynn Suter & Associates, a coalition was formed with the other big cities and counties who are in line for phase funded projects, with boating organizations and recreational boaters, to plan a letter writing campaign to thwart the efforts of the Senators.

Again, just as we have in the past, we asked our associates and boaters to write letters to Senate and Assembly representatives expressing their opposition to SB 1127. Our past letter writing campaigns have been successful, and this one was just as successful thanks to everyone's efforts.

It was a tough fight to the end and we were told many times that the bill had the backing of the Governor's office, the senate and assembly, and looked like it would be impossible to beat. As the session was drawing to an end, the bill still had not been considered, prompting a scathing press release from the Governor's office expressing, "disappointment" and calling it a, "mistake" that the Legislature was blocking SB 1127.

As the session was closing, Assembly Speaker Nunez still did not bring SB 1127 to a vote thus killing the bill. A huge victory for DBW, the recreational boaters of California, the San Francisco Marina and just another example of the growing influence boaters have in Sacramento.

Salmon fishermen have a serious situation and are still in need of assistance resulting from the water diversion on the Klamath River and the National Fisheries Service decision to limit commercial Salmon fishing in certain areas.

It has been the opinion of the coalition that this emergency was a result of decisions and actions of the Federal Government, thus an aid package should also come from the Federal Government and if not, then the State General Fund should be able to fund the bill from the \$7.5 billion in additional revenue collected this year.

As of press time it has been reported that the Governor will use his executive power to allocate \$10 million in General Funds to aid the commercial fishermen in addition to an effort by a California Congressmen seeking Federal funds to add to the aid package.

