



# Contra Costa County

To: Board of Supervisors  
From: Supervisor Mary N. Piepho  
Date: January 24, 2012

Subject: OPPOSE the Elimination of the Department of Boating and Waterways in the State Budget

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## **RECOMMENDATION(S):**

OPPOSE the proposed elimination of the Department of Boating and Waterways and the transfer of its functions to the Department of Parks and Recreation in the Governor's FY 2012-13 Budget, as recommended by Supervisor Mary N. Piepho.

## **FISCAL IMPACT:**

No fiscal impact to the County from this action.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The Governor's Budget for FY 2012-13 proposes to eliminate the Department of Boating and Waterways and transfer the functions to the Department of Parks and Recreation.

The Department of Boating and Waterways funds, plans, and develops boating facilities on waterways throughout California and ensures safe boating for the public by providing financial aid and training to local law enforcement agencies. In addition, the Department has responsibility for boating safety and education, licensing of yacht and ship brokers and salespeople, aquatic weed control in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and beach erosion control and sand renourishment along California's coast and operates an oceanography

☒ APPROVE

☐ OTHER

☐ RECOMMENDATION OF CNTY ADMINISTRATOR

☐ RECOMMENDATION OF BOARD COMMITTEE

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Action of Board On: **01/24/2012** ☒ APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED ☐ OTHER

Clerks Notes:

## **VOTE OF SUPERVISORS**

AYE: John Gioia, District I  
Supervisor  
Gayle B. Uilkema, District II  
Supervisor  
Mary N. Piepho, District III  
Supervisor  
Karen Mitchoff, District IV  
Supervisor  
Federal D. Glover, District V  
Supervisor

I hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of an action taken and entered on the minutes of the Board of Supervisors on the date shown.

ATTESTED: January 24, 2012

David Twa, County Administrator and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

By: June McHuen, Deputy

Contact: L. DeLaney,  
925-335-1097

cc:

program at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at La Jolla.

As contained in the Summary Budget (p. 30-31):

"The Department of Parks and Recreation currently partners with Boating and Waterways in facilities construction projects. Boating and Waterways funds operations at all of Parks' reservoirs. This proposal will transfer the functions of the Department of Boating and Waterways to a division of the Department of Parks and Recreation, similar to the Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Division. Because the Department of Boating and Waterways is being transferred to the Department of Parks and Recreation, the California Boating and Waterways Commission will be eliminated. The Commission advises the Department of Boating and Waterways on matters within its jurisdiction and consents to all boating facilities loans and grants. The duties performed by the Commission will be absorbed by the Department of Parks and Recreation."

Recreational Boaters of California [RBOC], an organization that advocates for recreational boating and its enthusiasts, is urging boaters to speak up in opposition to Governor Brown's proposal to eliminate the state Department of Boating and Waterways (DBW) and

re-constitute the department as a division within the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Eliminating DBW has already been rejected four times, when it was proposed by Governor Pete Wilson in 1992 and 1996 and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in 2003 and 2009.

The reasons that RBOC advances for why DBW must continue as a separate department include:

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## BACKGROUND: (CONT'D)

DBW provides accountability, transparency and leadership regarding the collection and use of boater-derived taxes and fees, and the best use of these funds for programs that benefit boating.

- Eliminating DBW would not save any General Fund dollars. The department is funded by boater fuel tax dollars, registration fees, and interest payments on infrastructure loans. Eliminating the department would not help resolve the current budget crisis.
- DBW creates jobs through loans and grants of boater fund for boating infrastructure throughout the state that ensures boater access to waterways. (*There is no indication in the State Budget documents that these funds would be eliminated.*)
- This state's more than 3 million boating enthusiasts must have a department with a Director whose primary focus is boating. DBW has a compact organizational structure and administers boating programs in a timely and non-bureaucratic manner. Its statutory charter is directly boating-related.

While one can understand the importance of finding savings during these difficult times, eliminating DBW would not help resolve the state's fiscal problems, and would jeopardize programs and services which the boating community has determined to be essential and is willing to finance.

Sheriff David Livingston concurs that the Department of Boating and Waterways should not be eliminated and has indicated that the Sheriffs' Association will also be opposing the change.

If this is just an internal reorganization within the Natural Resources Department with a clear distinction of a new "division" withing Parks and Recreation, there may be less of a concern. However, if there is a change that could involve mingling of monies or purpose then there is a greater a concern since Parks and Recreation has been very much park-focused, whereas, DBW has a much broader focus and mission.

The County has benefitted greatly from the availability of funds for abandoned vessel abatement as well as invasive species control efforts in the Delta by the Department of Boating and Waterways. A dilution of these efforts by a different department could have negative impacts on our boating community and our waterways.

## CONSEQUENCE OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

Without a position on this issue from the Board of Supervisors, the County will not be able to advocate on it.