

BOAT

Pennsylvania



The Keystone State's Official Boating Magazine

HOUSE BILL 2157



Gene Spori
Assistant Executive Director
Bureau of Waterways
Pennsylvania Fish Commission

Recently I received a call from a large city agency advising that it was considering charging a fee to launch from its boat ramp. The fee discussed was \$3 to \$5 per launch. A county park system that operates a small lake charges \$5 per year to launch — \$7.50 if you're *not* a county resident.

For the current annual fee of \$4 to \$6 if your boat is 16 feet or over, you can launch at some 190 Fish Commission ramps and countless other ramps owned or operated by state and local agencies. For owners of unpowered boats, you can launch free (\$5 launch permit for state park ramps). In addition, you get a bit of boating safety education, the protection of the law, and some pretty good representation in Harrisburg. Sounds like a lot of bang for the buck.

All these services for the cost of a small registration fee, of course, is not entirely true. The state marine fuel tax and the federal Wallop/Breaux money, derived primarily from the federal marine fuel tax, provide considerable income to the Boat Fund.

These three sources — boat registration fees, state marine fuel tax, and federal marine fuel tax — provide almost all the Boat Fund income. Note that all the income is derived from motorboats, and because the larger boats use more fuel, the larger the boat the greater the contribution.

House bill 2157 has been introduced and is now wending its way through the legislative system. The bill contains some unique provisions. First, it recognizes that unpowered boats should be contributing to the Boat Fund in return for services that have been rendered to owners of these boats for many years. Second, the bill recognizes that larger boats already contribute substantially to the Boat Fund through fuel taxes, and therefore the bill calls for a standard registration fee for boats regardless of length or propulsion. That standard fee is \$6 per year.

We held the registration fee down as long as we could — since 1963. The fact is that even though the rate of inflation has been low the past few years, the Boat Fund has been in a deficit spending mode for some years and it has reached the point where its health is suspect.

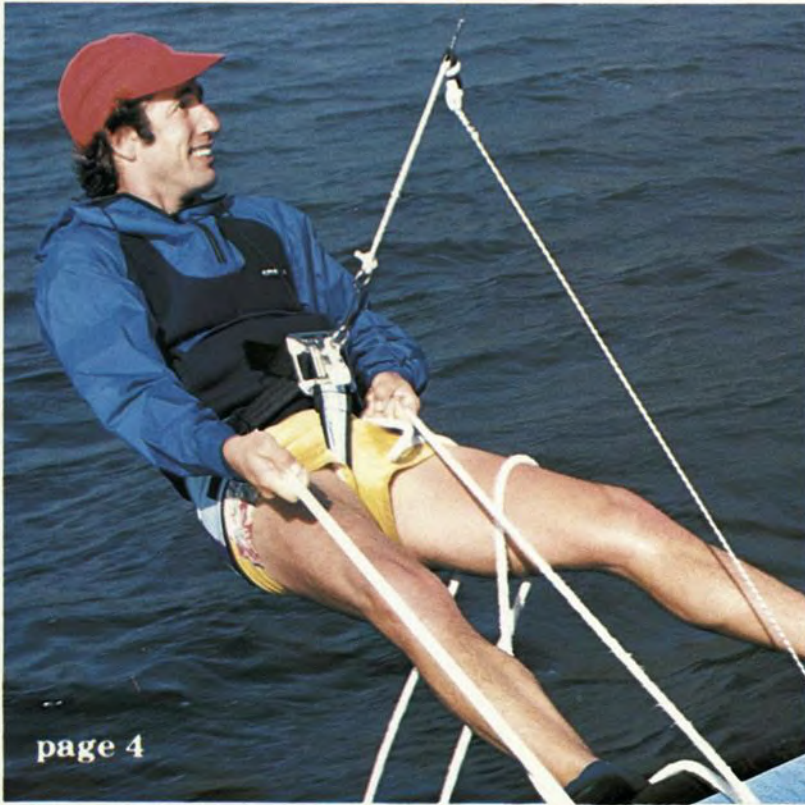
We ask that you support HB 2157.

John Simmons's article on page 26 explains the situation in more detail.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gene Spori".

BOAT

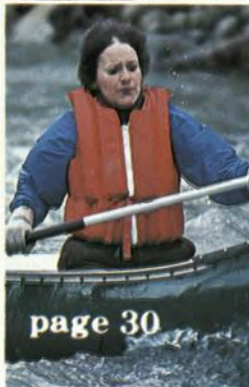
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The Cover

This issue's front cover, photographed by Dave Heitzenrater, shows Jack Finn of the Erie Yacht Club at the helm of his 35-foot sloop *Killary* during a race on Lake Erie. The crew member in the foreground is his daughter, Julie. This issue's back cover paddler was photographed by Denis Stager.

10 Ways to Improve Your Hobie Sailing Skills

by *Brian Alexander*
When the initial thrill of skimming across the water faster than you've ever thought possible wears off, you may want to hone your sailing skills for even more excitement with these boats. These 10 tips can help. 4

The Art of Lining

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Editor Art Michaels
Graphics Ted Walke
Photographer Russ Gettig
Circulation Eleanor Mutch
Staff Assistant Jayne Povleski

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