

**Testimony on SB 50 relating to Boater Education Requirements
To
The Senate Committee on Natural Resources**

**By Robin Jennison
Secretary
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SB 50 seeks to change requirements related to boater education certificates and possession. **The Department supports the provisions contained in the bill and requested introduction of the bill.** The provisions of the bill would be effective January 1, 2014.

SB 50 would require all persons born on and after January 1, 1989 to possess a certificate of completion of a boating safety course authorized by the Department in order to operate a motorboat or sailboat on Kansas public waters. Currently those over 21 are exempt from the requirement. The legal age for operation of a vessel in Kansas is 12.

Boater Education is largely an Internet-based safety course and provided free of charge by the Department. Approximately 1700 people took the Kansas boater education course last calendar year. And approximately 45 states require boater education in some fashion.

The Department suggested the original legislation in 2000 as well as the current amendment to address the trend of escalating boating-related accidents, fatalities, and property damage. Kansas averages about 40 boating-related accidents per year, 3 fatalities per year and hundreds of thousands of dollars per year in property damage and insurance claims. Finally, the vast majority of vessel accidents in Kansas involve an operator over the age of 21.

The Department appreciates the support of the Committee in recommending favorably the bill.

*Sen. Nat. Res.
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Attach. 1*