

Ohio Marine Trades Association
and Government Advantage Group

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

JULY 2026



ODNR to Participate in Operation DryWater Campaign July 3-5

ODNR Division of Parks and Watercraft will join law enforcement agencies across the country for Operation Dry Water, a nationwide awareness and enforcement effort taking place July 3-5, 2026. The annual campaign aims to reduce alcohol- and drug-related boating incidents and reinforce the dangers of boating under the influence.

Operation Dry Water is coordinated by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators in partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard and local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies. Officers from all 56 U.S. states, territories, and trusts are expected to participate in this year's heightened enforcement weekend.

RSCC 2026 lake event

The Ohio Legislature remains on recess as they embark on campaign season. The RSCC 2026 lake event is scheduled for Monday August 3rd. This is a great opportunity to connect with senate members and advocate for the marine trade industry!

SB 458

Senator Theresa Gavarone has introduced [SB 458](#) that creates warranty work protections for marine businesses. This is a priority bill for OMTA and we look forward to advocating in favor of this bill. SB 458 was referred to the Senate Transportation Committee.

Senate Bill 450 otherwise known as the Capital Appropriations Bill was passed by both chambers and is now heading to Governor DeWine's desk for his signature. This bill includes many marine and waterway related improvement projects through ODNR.

The House and Senate have passed House Concurrent Resolution 40 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 19 respectively. These resolutions urge Congress create the Ohio River Restoration Program.

On June 8th Governor DeWine signed SB 223 into law. This bill requires ODNR to offer veterans a discount of at least 25% on services such as dock rentals and other fees.

The House and Senate have officially adjourned and will most likely not be returning to Columbus until after the November General Election.

Ohio's Annual Free Fishing Days

The House and Senate have officially announced their session schedules for the remainder of the year and they will have 5 sessions beginning in middle of November.

SB 458 which regards watercraft dealers and warranty service repair work that OMTA has been spearheading was referred to Senate Transportation Committee.

Governor DeWine has signed the state's \$3.7 Billion Capital Appropriations Budget which funds the state's infrastructure along with community projects throughout the state.

ODNR has announced that Ohio's annual free fishing days on Saturday, June 20, and Sunday, June 21, give all residents a chance to fish at any public waterway without a license. This includes Lake Erie and Ohio's public lakes, reservoirs, streams, and rivers. June 20 and 21 is the only weekend of the year on which residents 16 years old and older can fish public waters without purchasing a fishing license. Anglers under 16 can fish for free year-round and are not required to hold a license. All other fishing regulations, size requirements, and bag limits apply during the special weekend.

Blueprint For Ohio's Economic Future

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce released their [Blueprint For Ohio's Economic Future](#). The report focuses on 6 strategic areas of opportunity to increase Ohio's competitiveness, including: Education & Workforce, Sense of Place, Taxes & Costs, Business Friendliness, Innovation & Collaboration, and Infrastructure.

In the report the Chamber makes tourism a key focal point within the Sense of Place strategic area stating that tourism is an economic driver and influences where people choose to live and to stay permanently.

Ohio Tourism

The Department of Development announced, Ohio welcomed nearly 245 million visitors in 2025, generating almost \$58 billion in economic impact and supporting more than 447,000 jobs, according to newly released TourismOhio data. State officials also announced a long-term partnership with the Greater Columbus Convention Center to market destinations across Ohio to more than one million annual convention visitors, reinforcing tourism's growing role in the state's economy.

Though OMTA does not make endorsements, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce which OMTA is a member of has announced their endorsed candidates for the November election.

<https://ohio-chamber-object-storage-m0uqx.sevalla.storage/uploads/2026/July/13/FOR%20IMMEDIATE%20RELEASE.pdf>

The Waterways Safety Council (WSC) invites the public to attend its next quarterly virtual meeting on August 19 at 9 a.m. online. The WSC, a citizen advisory council, provides crucial input on boating issues to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR).

Virtually via Microsoft Teams Live at: <https://rebrand.ly/wscouncil>

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OMTA had submitted comments expressing concerns on this Ohio EPA proposal. We are pleased with the announcement that a general permit for waste water discharge from data centers will be abandoned.

A Walk Through History

ODNR is inviting the public to attend “A Walk Through History”, a two-day event celebrating America’s 250th anniversary on August 8-9, 2026 at Independence Dam State Park. The event will feature nearly 80 historical reenactors and educators representing eras from the Revolutionary War through the present day. Visitors can explore living-history camps, watch demonstrations, enjoy entertainment, and purchase food from on-site vendors.

News to Peruse

[Beach glass hunting on Lake Erie: why collectors can't get enough in Our Best Life](#)
[What are Amy Acton's and Vivek Ramaswamy's road maps for Ohio's looming highway funding threat?](#)
[New H2Ohio partnership announced; algae bloom forecast released](#)
[Akron unveils real-time conditions tool for Cuyahoga River recreation](#)
[Major flooding on Kelleys Island after storms bring record rainfall](#)
[Flash flood creates historic damage on Kelleys Island](#)
[As Trump buyouts shake offshore wind industry, states hope developers stay in the game](#)
[No ferry, no crowds: Ohio opens vacation rentals on remote North Bass Island in Lake Erie](#)
[EPA Chief observes Ohio company's PFAS annihilator](#)
[Columbus company expands to limit 'forever' chemicals in drinking water](#)
[Dry forecast may help clear Lake Erie beach advisories](#)
[Algal bloom is forming now, but slowly](#)
[After backlash, Ohio EPA drops its blanket wastewater permit for data centers](#)
[EPA abandons proposed statewide data center wastewater permit](#)
[Ohio EPA backs off plan to let data centers dump wastewater into lakes](#)
[H2Ohio Rivers Program Provides More Than \\$80,000 to Support River Cleanups](#)
[Solutions sought for nutrient runoff into Ohio waterways](#)
[How state funding made a \\$229M Sandusky marina redevelopment project possible](#)