



January 15, 2021

The Honorable Representative Cindy Ryu
Chair, House Community & Economic Development
421 John L. O'Brien Building
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504

RE: HB 1018, 2021-22, Concerning Boater Education

Dear Representative Ryu:

My name is Scott Holley, and I am the President of Eddyline Kayaks. Eddyline is Washington state's largest manufacturer of kayaks. I am writing on behalf of Eddyline and our community of retailers and paddlers to voice our strong objection to House Bill 1018. This bill would require kayakers to pay for a motorboating education class, purchase a boater education card, and put additional restrictions on participation on youth under twelve years of age.

This year Eddyline is celebrating 50 years in business, manufacturing kayaks of the highest quality, sold by retailers throughout North America. Our purpose as a company is "to build quality craft that inspire people to safely and equitably enjoy access to clean and healthy waterways". We believe that HB 1018 is at odds with our stated mission.

Current boater education card training is designed for powered vessels of 15 hp or greater, not human powered lightweight craft. This training is unsuitable for human powered paddle sports. Critical kayak safety skills such as bracing strokes, unassisted reentry, and maneuvering through moving water are not part of the education curriculum for motorized craft. At Eddyline, we take pride in designing safe products, in demonstrating key product safety features during the selling process, and in selling to specialty retailers who can help new participants engage in the sport safely. We worry that a certificate of training from a course designed for motorboats would do little to advance safe paddling and may in fact provide new participants in the sport with a false sense of security.

Paddle sport activities, like jogging or cycling, are human powered activities that are accessible to people of all means and all walks of life. Requiring kayakers to take a course and pay for an irrelevant certificate will put an undue burden on lower income participants of this otherwise accessible sport, which is antithetical to our goal of equitable access.

Paddle sport activities provide physical and health benefits to individuals. There are few activities better suited for social distancing to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. Kayaking, canoeing, and paddle boarding are low impact activities to the environment. We should, now more than ever, encourage safe participation in these sports rather than creating barriers which will disproportionately impact lower income citizens of our state.

Last summer, my family went kayak camping on Baker Lake in Washington with our friends. I have three children, ages 7, 10 and 12. All of them know how to safely operate a kayak. I feel comfortable allowing them to kayak without close supervision within certain boundaries. My 10-year-old daughter was able to paddle around the corner from our campsite into a quiet cove with her friend, under the canopy of trees, with the sounds of the forest, and the water, and the wind. HB1018 would make this quiet moment illegal and would put these moments further out of reach of Washington families.

We urge you to vote against HB 1018. We are willing to work together with you collaboratively to find more appropriate and effective ways to advance the safety of our sport.

Sincerely,

Scott Holley
President and Co-Owner
Eddyline Kayaks

Dear Representative Ryu:

We the undersigned are paddlesport business owners and managers, and we stand with Eddyline Kayaks in opposition to HB 1018 for the reasons stated above.