NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE BOATING LAW ADMINISTRATORS

RESOLUTION 2012-2

Mandatory Wearing of Life Jackets
by Marine Law Enforcement Officers and Rescue Personnel

WHEREAS, the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators has supported and advocated for mandatory wear of life jackets for recreational boaters in vessels less than 16 feet and children under the age of 12 since 1993; and

WHEREAS, the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators adopted on September 8, 2008, a policy position encouraging all marine law enforcement, rescue personnel and other on-the-water professionals to require all employees to wear appropriate life jackets at all times when under way in open boats or on open deck spaces; and

WHEREAS, the National Boating Safety Advisory Council, meeting in Arlington, Virginia, on April 1-2, 2011, passed Resolution 2011-87-01 calling for the United States Coast Guard to seek appropriate regulations for life jacket wear by recreational boaters aboard all paddle craft and personal watercraft regardless of length and any vessel less than 18 feet in length; and

WHEREAS, given that an average of 500 people die in recreational boating accidents each year in the United States as a result of non-swimming-related drowning and very few are wearing a life jacket, consequently the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators agrees that law enforcement professionals and rescue personnel of member states should set an example of professionalism and safety on the water, for the boating public, by adopting a mandatory life jacket wear policy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, meeting this 11th day of September 2012 in Mobile, Alabama recommends:

1. Every member state and territory of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, by January 1, 2014, adopt a mandatory life jacket wear policy for their internal law enforcement officers and rescue personnel while under way in any department-owned vessel; and

2. Every member state and territory of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators that provides recreational boating safety dollars to an outside agency or partner require, by January 1, 2014, as a condition for receiving those dollars, that the outside agency or partner adopt a mandatory wear policy for their law enforcement and rescue personnel while under way in any department-owned vessel or operate within a policy consistent with their state boating law administrators’ agency.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators supports making the adoption of a mandatory life jacket wear policy for all marine law enforcement officers and rescue personnel who conduct recreational boating safety work under the federal/state partnership a condition of eligibility for grant funds by January 1, 2014.

Mike Fields, President