



MIAPBC is a not-for-profit organization created to promote and protect the sound growth of the marine industry in Palm Beach County for the benefit and education of its members, the community, and the environment

April 3, 2020

Ms. Verdenia Baker, County Administrator
Palm Beach County

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Dear Ms. Baker:

First and foremost, we would like to thank you and all of your hard-working associates at the county for your unwavering and dedicated effort to keep us safe and to keep the essential governmental functions open for business as best you can during these unprecedented times. As you might guess, our members and their businesses have been gravely affected by the shut-down of ramps and marinas, for recreational activities, but we totally understand and support the temporary need to do all that can be done to encourage social distancing.

There has been however, some serious confusion over the past several weeks caused by the various orders that have been issued, causing many of our members to call on us for clarity. Up and until yesterday, we too were getting mixed messages from the various different local and state entities.

Fortunately, the Governor yesterday clarified a fundamental issue of confusion surrounding boating, which is that while boat ramps and marinas are closed for recreational activities, boating, so long as social distancing rules are followed, is an essential activity as defined by his order. As he stated, a father and son leaving from a private dock from their backyard to go fishing, is an obvious example. I have attached the FWC order, which we think does a very good job of further articulating the rules surrounding ones use of their vessel and highlighting the importance of social distancing, in particular, limited number of passengers on board, the prohibition of congregating at sand bars, raft-ups, etc.

While we all hope that as the virus is defeated in the upcoming weeks, we can once again get our marinas and boat ramps re-opened, we would like to make sure that the industry and the County speak with the same voice. We would kindly request a meeting (conference call) with you, law enforcement, and whomever else you might think should be involved, so that we can together make sure the boating community clearly understands what is expected from them in terms of proper behavior and that we help make sure that message is understood and followed.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

George G. Gentile
President

CC: Board of County Commissioners