

OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF



HENNEPIN COUNTY, MN

February 28, 2023

Senator Kelly Morrison
3205 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for SF 553 Boater Education Safety

Dear Senator Morrison:

Thank you for your leadership as chief author of legislation to expand the recreational boating safety education program in Minnesota.

We have the responsibility to patrol Hennepin County's 104 lakes and 3 rivers, which offer countless recreational opportunities. The COVID-19 pandemic brought many people to enjoy Minnesota's great outdoors in a variety of ways, including through boating and water sports. In fact, Minnesota ranks second in the nation for registered boats with more than 825,000 registered boats, which equates to nearly one boat for every six people.

Most states require some form of boater education, and while Minnesota requires an operator safety education course for every other motorized recreational product, it does not require such a course for boating. I support your bill that would require mandatory boater safety education for operators and I urge its passage this legislative session.

The educational components that an expanded boater safety education program would support will make all of Minnesota's lake and waterways a much safer place, with less injury and accidents, for everyone to enjoy.

Thank you for your leadership to improve boater safety and let me know how the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office can lend its support to your work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dawanna Witt', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sheriff Dawanna Witt