

April 4, 2024

TESTIMONY OF THE OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER (OPD) REGARDING:

House Bill No: 7834

ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO WATERS AND NAVIGATION -- PERSONAL WATERCRAFT SAFETY

Chairman Craven and Member of the Judiciary Committee:

The Office of the Public Defender supports H7834, which proposes to make violations of the Personal Watercraft Safety Act, currently classified at petty misdemeanors, civil violations.

This bill recognizes the finite nature of criminal legal system's resources and better allocates them so as to effectuate rehabilitation, reentry, and public safety while recognizing acts that have no compelling reason to be criminalized have significantly less negative and unintended collateral consequences than those that are.

The OPD remains interested in working with any and all criminal justice stakeholders who recognize the finite nature of the resources available and who seek to decriminalize conduct that should not be subject to the long-lasting negative collateral consequences that a conviction can have.

Sincerely,

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