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FLORIDA'S 22<sup>ND</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

July 22, 2008

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## Rep. Klein Supports Common-Sense Boating Bill

**Washington, D.C.** – U.S. Representative Ron Klein (FL-22) today joined a bipartisan majority of his House colleagues to support two pieces of legislation critical to the 73 million recreational boaters nationwide, as well as fishermen and operators of small commercial vessels. The Clean Boating Act of 2008 (S. 2766) and its companion bill, S. 3298, will provide all recreational boaters and fishermen with exemptions to complicated and costly permits that would have been required by the Environmental Protection Agency beginning September 30 of this year.

Congressman Klein was the only Florida co-sponsor of the Clean Boating Act, which applies to recreational boaters. Both bills passed the House today under suspension of the rules after passing the U.S. Senate this morning. They will now go to the President for his signature.

“Today’s legislation is a critical fix for the nation’s 73 million recreational boaters, who would have otherwise faced a huge and unreasonable regulator burden this September,” Klein said. “The thought of all 73 million boaters applying for new permits is, frankly, ridiculous. We don’t need a new DMV for our recreational boaters – in fact, it’s just the opposite. The marine industry, which is so important to South Florida’s economy, is already facing difficulties because of the nationwide economic climate. Today’s legislation is a common-sense solution for those in the marine industry and everyday boaters.”

The legislative fix which passed Congress today was necessary because of a recent federal court ruling that all recreational boats must comply with the Clean Water Act of 1973 by obtaining a permit from the EPA for incidental discharges. The permit program was intended to stop the spread of invasive species from other countries, which large commercial vessels such as cruise ships, cargo ships and supertankers can introduce into U.S. waters when they dump what is known as ballast water. Without today’s legislation, some 73 million recreational boaters in the U.S., as well as all commercial fisherman, would have been forced to apply for permits, and would face fines of up to \$32,500 per day for violations.

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