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## **Fuel costs led to decline in transient boat traffic, especially in South**

Charleston, SC — High fuel prices in 2007-2008 led to a decline in transient boater traffic along the East Coast of the US, according to a survey conducted this summer by Applied Technology & Management (ATM). While high fuel costs were felt by boaters everywhere, this impact seems to have been the strongest in the South, where 76 percent of marinas reported a decline in transient visits; whereas in New England, only 37 percent of respondents reported a decline.

The reason for the regional difference may be that Northern transient boaters, accustomed to higher marina and boating costs, are less likely than Southern transients to be dissuaded by a spike in fuel prices from taking extended trips.

“In New England, the cost of owning a boat is very expensive due to high taxes, high real estate, high population density, and a low supply of facilities,” says Sam Phlegar, ATM senior vice president and director of ATM’s Marine Division. “If you own a boat in New England, particularly a vessel over 45 feet long, cost of fuel is not your number one concern. Thus, the price of fuel has less of an effect on boaters’ behavior. A short season and high cost to use a boat forces transient boaters in New England to make only a few trips per year.”

“The further south you travel, there are longer seasons, less costs, lower population densities, and more facilities,” Phlegar says. “Better weather, fishing, and diving make the South more popular to transients taking advantage of these sporting opportunities. In the North, yachting is more focused on cruising and day sailing with less long-range transient visitation.”

This reduced emphasis plays out in other areas in the survey results, and in marinas’ efforts to attract more transient boaters. In the past few years, 80 percent of marinas south of Maryland have added a new facility or major amenity to attract more transients. Only 46 percent of marinas north of Maryland have done so. More than 60 percent of Southern marinas plan to soon add more facilities aimed at transients, while only 30 percent of Northern marinas plan to do so.



### **About ATM**

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