Dear Congressman XXXXXXX:

As a [Recreational Fishing Alliance](https://joinrfa.org/) member I am deeply concerned over the vessel speed restrictions proposed by NOAA Fisheries in the [North Atlantic Right Whale Vessel Strike Reduction Rule](https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/amendments-north-atlantic-right-whale-vessel-strike-reduction-rule) (Document ID NOAA-NMFS-2022-0022-0005). The proposed speed restrictions will put human life at risk, devastate the recreational fishing and boating industry, and threaten small businesses along the Atlantic Coast.

Recreational anglers and boaters understand the need to safeguard America’s waters and endangered wildlife, including North Atlantic right whales. We agree that conservation measures must be developed with the best available science and that they are consistent with the magnitude of risk a particular activity poses. Unfortunately, NOAA’s proposed rule fails on these key principles in natural resource management.

With less than a one-in-a-million chance a recreational vessel 35 - 65 feet will strike a right whale, the proposed restrictions are unnecessarily severe and effectively turn the entire Atlantic Coast into a [go-slow zone](https://media.fisheries.noaa.gov/2022-07/Proposed_Seasonal_Speed_Zones_and_Current_Seasonal_Management_Areas_Map_508.pdf) for much of the year.

Vessel speed is a significant safety feature on a recreational boat, and the proposed restrictions will reduce the ability of boaters to outrun weather or otherwise safely operate their vessel in an appropriate manner for the given sea conditions. There is also a safety concern for those who might find themselves offshore in a non-emergency situation (out of fuel/broken down) waiting on commercial tow boats unable to respond in a timely manner under the speed restrictions.

Should NOAA’s proposed rule go into effect, not only will lives be jeopardized, but thousands of recreational boating and fishing trips will be cancelled – threatening a critical economic engine for Atlantic coastal communities and a major source of conservation funding nationwide.

Please weigh in with [NOAA Fisheries Administrator Janet Coit](http://janet.coit@noaa.gov) on behalf of anglers and boaters today. NOAA needs to pause this rulemaking and meet with key stakeholders to determine a better course of action that protects right whales and fosters recreational activity for hundreds of thousands of families along the East Coast.

Sincerely,

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