



Southeastern Legal Foundation Urges National Marine Fisheries Service to Throw Unconstitutional Boating Regulation Overboard

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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[June 1, 2026] Today, the Southeastern Legal Foundation (SLF), a national nonprofit of top attorneys that regularly defend constitutional rights, issued a public comment to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) urging the organization to fully rescind the unlawful vessel speed rule which heavily restricted boats over 65 feet traveling across the Atlantic by enforcing a 10 knot speed limit.

SLF previously filed a [petition](#) on behalf of multiple boat captains and owners to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and NMFS. The vessel speed rule was enforced in the name of protecting endangered whales but proved to be highly restrictive, forcing boaters to travel under the speed of a golf cart, with violations of the rule being potential jail time and \$20,000 fines.

The rule placed significant burdens on the boating and fishing industries, limiting the ability of commercial fishermen to effectively operate and earn a living. The comment states, "... regulations that treat fishermen like outlaws for traveling at safe speeds. Fish move. Fishermen must follow. To fill their holds and American stomachs, fishermen ought not to have to factor in the precise latitude and longitude coordinates of a regulated zone. And when schools of fish enter these zones, to follow them around puttering at 10 knots puts American fishermen at a disadvantage."

SLF President Kim Hermann said, "It's time that we officially put this Obama-era rule to end and not hold boaters and fishermen back from enjoying the open waters and making a living. I understand that the desire to protect whales is a noble pursuit, but this rule has proven to do anything but that. In fact, the only thing that the rule did was successfully cripple the boating industry while putting the livelihoods of boaters and fishermen at risk. I highly encourage that NMFS finally rescinds this outdated and restrictive rule."



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