



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **Small Business and Tourism Industry Comes to the Defense of Sportfishing and Whale Watching Boat Owners**

***CARB's Proposed Engine Emission Regulations Could Undermine Governor Newsom's Plan to  
Restore Tourism and Hospitality Jobs Lost During COVID-19 Pandemic***

**(San Diego, CA):** With less than four weeks before the California Air Resources Board (CARB) is set to determine the fate of 174 commercial passenger boat owners, the Sportfishing Association of California and the Golden Gate Fishermen's Association announced that 27 chambers of commerce and tourism authorities, representing nearly every coastal community from San Diego to the Oregon border, have joined a coalition in defense of commercial passenger boat owners. The business coalition includes the California Chamber of Commerce, the California Travel Association, the National Federation of Independent Business, the RV Park and Campgrounds Alliance and the California Parks Hospitality Association.

[In their letter to the Chair](#) of the California Air Resources Board, the coalition wrote;

"As you well know, sportfishing and whale watching boats provide coastal communities a valued source of outdoor recreation and tourism dollars. Their boat owners are in the business of introducing millions of Americans a year to the splendor of the open sea and its wildlife. However, before these boat owners can recover from financial losses associated with the pandemic, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) has proposed costly engine emission regulations that require technology that has not been developed or tested safe on passenger harbor crafts."

The letter continues, "Rebuilding the State's post-pandemic economy is dependent on continuing this growth and not undermining it by denying millions of Californians access to offshore fishing and marine life by putting sportfishing companies out of business or making excursions unaffordable for disadvantaged communities and the vast majority of Californians."

Sportfishing, whale watching, eco-tourism and dive boats can be found in nearly every harbor and marina in California. With the addition of sportfishing, boating and marina/harbor organizations, outdoor retailers and fishing tackle manufacturers the [Save Our Boats coalition](#) has grown to over 40 business and trade organizations.

During the pandemic, California lost half of its 1.2 million tourism/hospitality related jobs and [Governor Gavin Newsom has made restoring these lost jobs a centerpiece of his economic plan](#). While members of the coalition applaud this goal, they don't believe the economic plan is achievable without protecting passenger boats that fuel coastal economies.

While commercial passenger boats represent less than 10% percent of all harbor crafts, these family operated businesses are responsible for drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors to coastal communities each year, generating billions of dollars in visitor spending. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, California's over 2 million anglers contributed \$5.6 billion a year in [economic activity](#) and supported nearly 40,000 jobs for our State.

## **Background**

On September 21, 2021, CARB released its [Proposed Amendments to the Commercial Harbor Craft Regulation](#). The public comment period is September 24 – November 15th, and the CARB Board, appointed largely by Governor Gavin Newsom, is expected to rule November 19, 2021. To date, over 20,000 anglers have signed a petition and [over 1,600 public comments have been submitted to CARB](#).

CARB has proposed regulations that require engines to be modified with technology that has not been developed yet for commercial passenger fishing vessels or confirmed safe at sea. In most cases, the modifications will be too massive to fit into existing engine rooms. This led the [California State University Maritime Academy](#) to conclude that the proposed standards for existing engines does not exist and in the alternative, "... treatment equipment (modifications) alone significantly impacts the vessel's stability."

Given that compliance will be impossible for some, if not most, passenger boats, [CARB concluded that vessels constructed of wood and fiberglass will likely be removed from service](#). Over 80 percent of commercial passenger boats are constructed of wood and fiberglass, requiring boat owners to purchase new metal boats beginning as soon as 2023 or go out of business as extensions expire.

The [Sportfishing Association of California](#) (SAC) is a trade organization representing Southern California sportfishing and whale watching boat and landing owners. [The Golden State Fishermen's Association](#) represents commercial passenger fishing vessels and marine recreational anglers in Northern California.

**Interviews can be arranged with boat owners from most ports and marinas.** To view the coalition, [www.savefishing.com/coalition](http://www.savefishing.com/coalition).

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