



August 30, 2026

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House Of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson:

On behalf of the roughly 300 member companies of the National Fisheries Institute (NFI), I write to express our support for H.R. 9436, the Northeast Lobstermen Protection Act. This bill would extend the regulatory pause of the Department of Commerce's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Final Rule implementing the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan.

For 80 years NFI has been the leading voice for the fish and seafood industry and America's largest seafood trade association. Our members span the entire seafood value chain—from East Coast lobstermen and scallop harvesters, Alaska vessel owners, Pacific processors, Midwest importers, Southern shellfish producers, to aquaculture providers, distributors, cold storage providers, retailers, and seafood restaurants. Collectively, these companies supply American families with tens of millions of sustainable seafood meals every year and directly support over 1.04 million American jobs.

NFI and its members believe strongly in the importance of sound science to help determine the health of the various fisheries and ensuring that fisheries comply with the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act. History and science show that the lobster industry has gone above and beyond to reduce bycatch and entanglement of the right whale; for over 20 years there have been no deaths or entanglements from the lobster industry. However, NMFS did not follow the science and risked shutting down the lobster industry with the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan regulation. It took Congress enacting a six-year moratorium in 2022 to get the agency to consider the best available science.

Along with the legislative pause, Congress provided funding for new efforts to gather information to support a data-driven process establishing regulations that made sense for both the fishermen and the whales. Despite this, NMFS is woefully behind on the schedule, and those collecting the data say more time is needed.

H.R. 9436 would do just that—it would extend the moratorium from 2028 until 2035, giving both those charged with collecting the data and NMFS the time needed to ensure sound science prevails; thus, also protecting one of America's most iconic fisheries.

Please support the Northeast Lobstermen Protection Act as it comes to the floor this week.

Sincerely,

Lisa Wallenda Picard
President and CEO