

August 31, 2026

Dear Members of Congress,

As community, environmental, and civic leaders based in New York and New Jersey, we write to express our strong opposition to H.R. 9436. This legislation would delay urgently needed protections for the North Atlantic right whale for seven years, freezing management progress until 2035.

North Atlantic right whales are regularly seen in waters off of Long Island, New York and the Coast of New Jersey. Migrating over 1000 miles from their northeast feeding grounds to their southern calving grounds, they have already been recorded in the [New York Bight](#) and southeast of [Atlantic City, New Jersey](#) this year. In 2024, scientists from the [New England Aquarium](#) [recorded 82 Right whales](#) – including 56 in one day – forty miles south of Long Island. This represents nearly a quarter of the total population.

Extinction is permanent, and the crisis facing the North Atlantic right whale demands immediate, courageous leadership. With fewer than 400 individuals remaining — and a critically low count of roughly 70 breeding females — every single year of delayed action brings this species closer to disappearing forever. The science is undisputed: accidental entanglement in vertical fishing lines is one of the primary drivers of serious injury and death for these whales, with over 86% of living right whales carrying scars from past entanglements. These injuries and deaths are preventable, but only if our national policy allows science-based solutions to move forward.

H.R. 9436 sets a dangerous precedent by locking our ocean management into outdated status quo practices for nearly a decade. Specifically, the bill would prevent NOAA Fisheries from developing and implementing science-based management measures that could reduce the risk of entanglements, such as modifying fishing practices in areas and at times of highest risk, and expanding new technologies that both protect whales and maintain fishing opportunities. Protecting endangered wildlife and fostering resilient coastal economies are not opposing goals. Pushing safety measures off to 2035 stalls the momentum behind collaborative ocean stewardship, science-based dynamic management, and crucial federal resources that help both whales and coastal communities thrive.

Communities in New York and New Jersey have consistently supported forward-thinking, science-based approaches that safeguard our shared marine heritage while ensuring our coastal economies can adapt and flourish. Halting progress for another seven years undermines the work our region has done to promote a healthy ocean ecosystem.

The North Atlantic right whale cannot afford to wait until 2035, and neither can the communities that care about the future of our oceans. We urge you to reject H.R. 9436 and stand up for the recovery of one of the most endangered species on Earth.

Sincerely,

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