



MEETING POSTING

TOWN OF NANTUCKET

Pursuant to MGL Chapter 30A, § 18-25

All meeting **notices and agenda** must be filed and time stamped with the Town Clerk's Office and posted at least 48 hours prior to the meeting (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays)

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2024 JUN 12 AM 11:37
NANTUCKET TOWN CLERK
Posting Number:T 544

Committee/Board/s | Nantucket School Committee

Day, Date, and Time | Friday, June 14, 2024, 12:00 PM

Location / Address | Nantucket Public Schools
32 First Way, Nantucket, MA 02554
Central Office & Remote Participation VIA Zoom

**Signature of Chair or
Authorized Person**

Katli Bedu

WARNING:

**IF THERE IS NO QUORUM OF MEMBERS PRESENT, OR IF MEETING
POSTING IS NOT IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE OML STATUTE, NO
MEETING MAY BE HELD!**

AGENDA

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88295292560?pwd=vQQ6My2RbHtxeAEQF0jmhctMVtpz4t.1>

Meeting ID: 882 9529 2560

Passcode: 044762

- I. Call to Order
- II. Welcome and approval of agenda
- III. Committee discussions and votes to be taken
 - a. Vote to Approve the Proposed Vessel Speed Reduction Letter to Legislators
- IV. Adjournment



Nantucket Public Schools



www.npsk.org

School Committee

10 Surfside Road . Nantucket, MA 02554 . Phone: 508-228-7285 . Fax: 508-325-5318

June 11, 2024

Senator Ed Markey
255 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Elizabeth Warren
309 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Congressman William Keating
2351 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Proposed NOAA North Atlantic Right Whale Vessel Strike Reduction Rule

Dear Senators Markey and Warren and Congressman Keating:

We are members of the Nantucket Schools Committee vested with ultimate legal responsibility to protect the best interests of the Nantucket Public Schools, with its 1,707 students and over 350 staff members. **We write on their behalf to highlight the particular and dire impacts that the proposed NOAA North Atlantic Right Whale Vessel Strike Reduction Rule will have on them. Our school community, students, and staff urgently need your assistance and support.**

It is critical that **Nantucket Sound be exempted from the proposed Rule**. If adopted as currently written, it would have a devastating and life-altering impact on the Nantucket Public Schools and their ability to educate the island's children effectively.

To be clear, we see right whale conservation efforts as a highly important and worthwhile matter. But those efforts must be focused where the whales actually travel and congregate, and that is not Nantucket Sound. According to our primary ferry operators, there have been **no documented right whale sightings in Nantucket Sound during more than one million trips between Hyannis and Nantucket over the past 25 years**. Many (if not all) of Nantucket's long-time commercial fishers concur and have never seen right whales in their frequent travels to the Hyannis area from Nantucket.

This edict would eliminate fast ferry passenger service to the island for more than half of the year and significantly reduce the number of trips the Woods Hole, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Steamship Authority could operate for its traditional freight and vehicle ferries during that period to two round-trip passages per day (weather permitting). These vessels provide the freight, vehicle, food, fuel, municipal, solid waste disposal, and medical supply "lifeline to the islands." As countless members of the Nantucket public have made clear, the economic consequences on Nantucket would be cataclysmic – likely more than \$100 million and much higher than NOAA's flawed estimation, which does not account for major shoreside impact. But **the effect on our island's schools would also be uniquely devastating.**



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With a 77% participation rate in our school athletic program, **it would be nearly impossible for our student-athletes, many of whom are multiple-sport athletes, to compete in middle and high school athletic competitions**, and we would struggle to have any teams or officials come to the island to play Nantucket teams. For island children, athletics is one of the most important options for after-school activities, and our Athletic Department depends on fast ferry transportation almost every day to transport Nantucket student-athletes and student-athletes from other communities to and from our island schools.

We are also deeply concerned about **the ability to maintain our regular food service supply for our school cafeterias**. Unbeknownst to many, close to 43% of Nantucket children are considered economically disadvantaged, and often their only opportunity for two nutritionally balanced meals comes from our school cafeterias.

Nantucket Public Schools have an added challenge - the remoteness of island living in **attracting high-quality educators to move to Nantucket and teach in our schools**. Our ability to hire teachers and other staff to educate our island's growing number of students, who are so deserving of meaningful and appropriate education, would be greatly reduced. Our school employees would be severely limited in accessing essential services and opportunities for off-island, real-world learning for our children, required professional development for educators, and other important educational experiences for staff and students. Finally, and of the highest importance, our **students who have severe special needs are entitled by law to the services they require so that can receive a free and appropriate public education**. Many of these services are met through contract providers, many of whom commute to the island. The proposed rule could well affect how and when these services are provided, with unpredictable consequences.

We are certain that you will agree that the list of adverse impacts on our schools and their students should be avoided, especially when balanced against the lack of evidence that the proposed rule will confer any real benefit if implemented for Nantucket Sound. To this end, we urge you to request that NOAA amend the proposed rule with an exemption for Nantucket Sound when considering seasonal speed zones, similar to exemptions granted for the waters of Long Island Sound, Buzzards Bay, and Narragansett Bay.

Please do not allow a stunningly shortsighted and inadequately researched – yet well-intentioned – rule to sever Nantucket's lifeline to the mainland. The effect it would have on Nantucket's children and their futures would be devastating.

From 30 miles at sea, we are relying on your support and advocacy.

Sincerely,

Pauline Proch

Pauline Proch
Chair, Nantucket School Committee

Laura Gallagher Byrne

Laura Gallagher Byrne
Vice-Chair, Nantucket School Committee