

Captain Todd Geroy, LLC
1917 Holiday Lane
Naples, FL 34104

May 13, 2016

Mr. James Calvin, Chairman
Collier County Local Rule Review Committee

Dear Mr. Calvin and Collier County LRRC Committee Members:

It has come to my attention that the Collier County Local Rule Review Committee, at the request of the FWC, is currently evaluating the issue of the permits issued to the commercial fisherman and professional guides allowing them to run up to 20 mph through certain manatee Slow Speed zones in Collier County (during weekdays, excluding holidays, when there are paying customers on board). As part of your consideration, you are exploring the discontinuation of issuing the permits.

I am a professional guide, along with my son, and we are both current permit holders. I have been a guide since 1981 and a permit holder since they were first issued. I attended multiple manatee workshops when these zones were first being considered for protection. I respectfully implore you to allow for the continuation of issuing the permits now and in the future for the livelihood of many who share a great local fishery that attracts many anglers to this area and enhances the outdoor experiences offered in Collier County.

The issue of discontinuing the permits affects my livelihood as well as the livelihood of all of many professional guides here in Collier County who rely on the permits to make their trips productive for their anglers in an efficient manner. The inshore waters near and around Marco Island, Johnson Bay, Addison Bay as well as all of waters between Naples and Goodland make up such a significantly large area that it takes quite a bit of time to traverse if not on plane. Reducing the time that it takes to travel through the manatee zones off plane limits the actual fishing time for any trip. Clients pay for fishing, not a boat ride. Because the average guide runs as many as two 4-4.5 hour ½ day trips each day their geographical region that can be reasonable reached without the permit would be significantly reduced.

The professional guides are among the best advocates for the manatee and are great stewards for their well-being. We provide education to our anglers daily and understand the role that they have in the ecosystem. We are by far the safest, most experienced boaters on the water and understand the impact of boat traffic on the fishery.

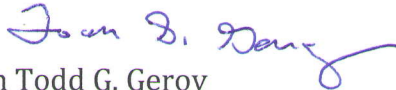
I have been told that these permits have been a source of some confusion and contention, especially the guiding permits because the boats used by guides are almost always indistinguishable from recreational boats that are being operated in the same locations and

for the same purpose. State, federal, and local law enforcement have had difficulties with enforcement.

To alleviate the confusion to the recreation boater caused by seeing a professional guide on plane in the Slow Speed Zone, perhaps a solution can be found by working with law enforcement (state, federal and local) to have identifiable markings on boats that have active permits, specific language on Slow Speed signage and markers as well as educational materials for the rental boat concessionaires so that they can educate their patrons on the rules of the waterways, including manatee zones.

Currently there are 42 active permits in Collier County, 33 of which cover guiding activities. That is 31 professional guides, along with me and my son, who rely on the permits for our livelihood. Please continue to issue the professional guide permits so that we may continue to offer a quality fishing experience for our anglers and guests.

Respectfully,



Captain Todd G. Geroy

CC: Mr. Scott Calleson, FWC
Mrs. Donna Fiala, Chairman, Collier County Board of County Commissioners