**Why Fort Lauderdale is rooting for the Miami International Boat Show**

The economic impact of a Super Bowl is amazing, but its location changes annually, unlike events such as Art Basel or the Miami International Boat Show. These homegrown international events promote and grow Miami's vibrant economy every year and must be stewarded by public and private leaders for the good of the community.

What attracts people to Miami is the water and its diversity. The waterfront and accompanying industry create revenue for the region, incite people to do things like build resorts, restore reefs and generate property taxes, among many other economic benefits.

The presence of the Miami International Boat Show, which is produced by the National Marine Manufacturers Association and has taken place for the past 74 years, keeps our region economically strong and complements the Marine Industries Association of South Florida's [Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show](http://www.sun-sentinel.com/topic/sports/sailing/fort-lauderdale-international-boat-show-EVFES0000116-topic.html). When the show started in 1941, America was at war and Franklin Roosevelt was president. We cannot allow it to be harmed, and we hope the challenges it is facing from Miami-Dade County and Key Biscayne are just a bump in the road.

The Miami International Boat Show in February also benefits the Florida Yacht Brokers Association's Yacht Miami Beach show on Collins Avenue, which takes place at the same time. These shows support an $11.5 billion marine industry that employs 136,000 people in the region and pays wages that are 28 percent higher than the state average of $46,566.

The true economic benefit of the show is not just the approximately $500 million impact it has for five days, but the year-round impact it has on all businesses that exhibit. Community businesses benefit greatly as well when the industry's workforce spends its wages at local grocery stores, day cares, car dealers, dentists and countless other businesses in the community.

The hurdles the show is facing highlight the importance of stewarding and reinvesting in a boat show, raising awareness of its importance among elected officials and educating people about this economic gem in order to ensure its next 74 years and beyond. If this can happen in Miami, it can happen in Fort Lauderdale or anywhere else.

The show is a public event on public land, and investments into the Virginia Key site would have other public uses. Additional community events including cultural, art, music or other activities would serve a community purpose and provide a community benefit.

What's happening today reflects a lack of awareness and education of the benefits derived from the show and the region's marine industry. It highlights the importance of investing both in infrastructure and awareness of the value of all boat shows and the marine industry to South Florida.

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