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Changing Regulations for Superyacht Owners



Thailand Tourism Minister Kobkarn is pushing hard to change regulations in Phuket and Thailand directly affecting Superyacht Owners.

Asia Pacific Superyachts has been lobbying hard with the government of Thailand to get visas and yacht-charter regulation laws changed. Now Gordon Fernandes and Captain Charlie Dwyer of APS are pleased to share updated news of changing regulations for Superyachts, with

news published in the Phuket Gazette newspaper April 2015. A special task force has been formed to come up with viable suggestions for changes to visas and yacht-charter regulations to help boost marine tourism in Phuket, with a working deadline for rolling out the changes by 2016. "The task force comprises officials from relevant government agencies, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Tourism and Sports and the Immigration Bureau," Tourism Minister Kobkarn Wattanavrangkul revealed to the Phuket Gazette in an exclusive interview. "We are working together to come up with suggestions for changes to visas and other regulations that would be best for the country," she said. "This includes changes that will boost the chartering of foreign-flagged superyachts in Thai waters." "Prime Minister Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha has pledged his full support for bureaucratic changes to help boost marine tourism," Ms Kobkarn added. "Minister Prajin confirmed that he had met with PM Prayut, who he said pledged his full support for improving all aspects of marine tourism, including yacht and superyacht charters." Ms Kobkarn said she could not reveal any more details as any proposed changes had yet to be finalized. "This is an important issue, as any changes will affect different types of visas and businesses. We must also consider internal security and safety measures a top priority, but I will support the changes suggested because it means a lot for tourism," she said. "We hope to have used rules in place by the end of this year to help secure the island's position as the top yachting destination in the region." The move to overhaul the visas and laws regulating yacht charters follow a meeting with Phuket Governor Nisit Jansomwong and Gulu Lalvani, chairman of the Royal Phuket Marina, in January. At the meeting, Ms Kobkarn vowed

to raise concerns voiced about crew visas and the chartering of foreign-flagged superyachts. “Changing the regulations in order to develop our tourism is a must in response to heightened competition from other yachting destinations in the region,” she said. “It will take time for the suggested changes to be presented to the Cabinet and approved, but we are making good progress.” Among the changes to ramp up marine tourism in Phuket is the push for a multi-million-baht harbor expansion at the Deep Sea Port at Ao Makham, Ms Kobkarn added. “Current regulations allow only one-year concessions to operate ports, but we are looking at what can be done to allow long-term concessions,” she said “We are looking at becoming attractive hosts for yachts, cruise liners and superyachts – all for long-stay, not just short stays. “This is what we aim to do and I hope to have a clear picture set by the end of the year.”