



DEMA ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Bringing Businesses Together to Grow the Diving Industry Worldwide

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WHAT IS DEMA?

The Diving Equipment and Marketing Association is a non-profit trade association. More than that, DEMA is a community of professionals often working together and sharing what they know. DEMA provides members and the Industry with tangible benefits that are funded by earnings from the Industry's participation in the annual DEMA Show, sponsorships, and from DEMA membership dues. Importantly, DEMA channels earnings BACK INTO the Diving Industry, creating market and industry research, guiding legislation and regulatory issues to help the Industry, developing marketing and PR programs, and producing other Industry efforts, all for the benefit of DEMA Members. DEMA doesn't take money out of the Diving Industry.

As with any year, there are ongoing business challenges, challenges which continue to be made more difficult since COVID-19, and include high levels of inflation and government

regulation. DEMA continues to seek out ways to make it possible for Industry participants to collaborate with the Association and with each other, and to be successful. Most of all, DEMA is a community of diving professionals who share a similar goal – to come together to grow the diving industry worldwide.

DESCRIPTION

Worldwide trade association for the recreational diving and snorkeling industries; Includes more than 1,100 members worldwide.

DEMA'S MISSION

Bringing Businesses Together to Grow the Diving Industry Worldwide.

STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Build a community among DEMA Members with a culture and environment that will produce valued relationships.

2. Create worthwhile opportunities for DEMA Members to share and exchange information and knowledge.
3. Provide learning opportunities that are responsive to DEMA Member needs and relevant to the changing dynamics of the Diving Industry.
4. Be at the forefront of addressing the legislative and regulatory initiatives that affect the Recreational Diving Industry.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Engagement: To provide a community culture in the Diving Industry through personal interaction.

Industry Practices: To model and foster an inclusive culture within the Diving Industry by sharing useful and successful practices originating from DEMA Members and the Industry.

Innovation: To create and deliver new value for DEMA Members.

Education: Through a culture of engagement, provide relevant professional development along the continuum of careers and activities within the diving community.

Resources: To serve as a resource for the Diving Industry, including:

- Sharing useful and successful business and management practices
- Industry Research
- Appropriate Standards
- Creating opportunities for the DEMA community to advance personally and professionally through collaboration

TACTICAL GOALS:

1. Produce an annual trade event for the Industry which serves the needs of its stakeholders and produces a successful financial outcome for the association.
2. Engage in marketing programs that promote non-commercial diving of all kinds, create new customers of all ages,

drive consumers into retail stores and resorts, and promote customer retention.

3. Dedicate resources to preventing potential legislation which could adversely affect the Industry.
4. Engage in marketing research programs which will:
 - Define the universe of divers.
 - Determine the rate of erosion among existing divers.
 - Determine the number of entry-level scuba certifications that take place in the United States and the Caribbean each year.
 - Seek opportunities to obtain global data on diver certification and participation.
 - Provide retail operational data.
5. Engage in activities that promote the health of aquatic resources while protecting diver access to those resources.

COMMITTEES:

Committees are made up of Members and may include Board members or other DEMA-Member volunteers from within the Diving Industry. These committees are advisory to the Board of Directors and DEMA Staff and bring a wealth of experience to the Association. In practice, those designated as “Board Committees” are most often chaired by DEMA board members, while Program Committees are most often chaired by members who are not directors. Committee Chairs must be the voting representative of their DEMA-Member company.

Committees help to provide input to the DEMA Board of Directors and Staff. Having opinions and insight from the diving community is critical, and the learning curve works both ways; many volunteers learn the inner workings of a non-profit business and trade association, including the nuances and challenges of providing the best services and promotions that meet the needs of all five stakeholder groups simultaneously.

THE 2024 DEMA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

<u>A1-Manufacturing</u> • Mike Hollis, Pro Asia • Tom Phillipp, XS Scuba, Inc.	<u>A2-Diver Certification and Training Agencies</u> • Tom Leaird, Scuba Educators International • Jeff Mondle, PADI Americas
<u>A3-Dive Consulting, Media, Non-Retail Service Providers, and Publishing</u> • William Cline, Cline Group Advertising • Dan Orr, Dan Orr Consulting	<u>A4-Retailers</u> • Jeffrey Cinciripino, Scuba Shack Diving Services • Richard Thomas, International Scuba
<u>A5-Travel & Resorts</u> • Shana Phelan, Pura Vida Divers, LLC • Steve Weaver, Dream Weaver Travel	

2024 BOARD/STANDING COMMITTEES

<u>Executive Committee</u> • Dan Orr, Chair • William Cline, Senior Vice Chair • Steve Weaver, Vice Chair • Tom Leaird, Treasurer/Secretary	<u>Finance Committee</u> • Bradley Barnett • Mike Hollis • Tom Leaird, Chair • Tim Webb	<u>Manufacturing Committee</u> • Charlie Bush • Patrick Danko • Tor Ericsson • Mike Hollis, Chair • Tom Phillipp
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DEMA's full committee list appears in this report under Member Engagement. DEMA Member companies with an interest in serving on future committees should contact DEMA's Membership Manager, Alicia Vasquez, at alicia@dema.org. ■





MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

WHY BECOME A DEMA MEMBER?

Why become part of any association? Aside from contributing to the “greater good” of your Industry, people who join associations do so because it helps them work with others in the same industry to solve a business problem or achieve a goal. Now more than ever, during these difficult economic times, the Recreational Diving Industry needs to work together to make our industry stronger. Members are at the heart of the Diving Equipment and Marketing Association, and DEMA is uniquely positioned to help address concerns from various industry stakeholders, who sometimes have conflicting priorities.

No single diving stakeholder group, or vendor can bring businesses together to grow the diving industry and solve the issues that the industry faces. As a non-profit trade association, DEMA’s mission is to bring the various business stakeholders together to grow the Diving



Industry. DEMA recognizes that the most successful businesses and business professionals:

- Become part of the diving community through networking and communication, supporting a culture and environment that produces valued business and personal relationships.
- Share and exchange information and knowledge within the Community.

- Learn more about running a diving business through education and experience programs that are responsive to changing business needs and relevant to the dynamics of the Diving Industry.
- Participate in legislative and regulatory initiatives that work for a better environment while positively affecting their business.

These are among DEMA's strategic goals - the very strategies and goals that help fuel businesses and personal growth. While a DEMA membership also provides businesses with access to direct benefits in terms of products and services, DEMA most importantly helps businesses and professional members move along the path of success.

DEMA is a unique trade association because membership includes participants from the entire, vertical, Recreational Diving Industry "sales cycle," including non-diving businesses connected to DEMA Members by selling products and services to dive professionals. Membership's stakeholders include:

- A1 - Manufacturers and Distributors of Diving Equipment, including Manufacturing Reps
- A2 - Diver Certification and Training Agencies
- A3 - Diving Publications, Media, Diving Industry Consultants, Associations and Non-Retail Service Providers
- A4 - Retail Distribution of Diving Goods and Services
- A5 - Dive Travel and Resorts
- B - Associate Members - those organizations, firms, partnerships, associations, or individuals who are ineligible for any other classes of Membership and which subscribe to the Objects and Purposes of the Association.

DEMA REWARDS PROGRAM

DEMA continued to implement its Rewards Program that rewards Members for their

engagement with other DEMA Members and the Association.

The "DEMA Rewards" program makes it even more beneficial to be a DEMA Member with rewards that can be exchanged for future Membership discounts, merchandise, and even high-visibility sponsorships. The DEMA Board of Directors recognizes the value of "engagement" and the need to help Members connect with one another through the Association. Under the DEMA Rewards Program, DEMA Members can participate in the Association's programs and earn rewards points which can be exchanged for valuable assets. More information on this program can be found in this Annual Report, and [here](#).

COMMUNITY BUILDING THROUGH NETWORKING AND COMMUNICATION

The recreational diving community includes thousands of professionals working as business owners, employees, contractors, instructors, diving leaders, and more. We all learn from each other through a variety of resources, and while nothing beats face-to-face learning, networking, and idea exchanges with real people in real-time, as a result of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, we all learned that it is still possible to connect, learn and grow using virtual, online tools when we must. One key diving community benefit for DEMA Members is the annual DEMA Show, including educational opportunities and various kinds of meetings.

During DEMA Show the DEMA Association sponsors professional development on a variety of topics, but just as important are the chances to learn face-to-face from other companies in the industry; those who exhibit and provide professional education directly related to their own products and services.

Networking is more than just meeting at the bar after Show hours. It involves "engagement" with the activities that are beneficial for your business



and personal growth. People and organizations (including DEMA) learn by listening to others.

MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS

One thing we have learned over the past couple years is that community and learning to lean on one another is incredibly important during trying times. With the help of its members, DEMA helps the victims of catastrophic storms and other occurrences with the DEMA Disaster Assistance Program; “Members Helping Members,” building a bridge of assistance for those affected by these disasters while permanent aid is being requested from the appropriate government, private or public agencies.

The MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS Program may provide any or all of these types of *Disaster Assistance:

1. Exhibitor Assistance: Designed for companies exhibiting at the DEMA Show, each company involved and from specific affected regions may apply for funds to help them get to the trade show, where promotional opportunities can help them get back into operation. Affected

companies will apply for the assistance funds through the DEMA office, and funds will be awarded to companies exhibiting at the show.

2. Attendee Assistance Program: Designed for Registered DEMA Show Buyers who are staying in the DEMA hotel room block, attendees can receive a complimentary one-night hotel stay (base rate only. Does not include Tax and Service Fees). When available, this program is limited to one buyer from each retail store and for reservations made within DEMA’s hotel block. Attendees from affected retail stores will have two weeks to submit receipts following the show for reimbursement.

**In general, a “Disaster” will be defined as any event that is declared such by an involved government entity. Applications for assistance will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.*

ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF THE DIVING COMMUNITY

Participating in DEMA’s advocacy efforts provides ample opportunity to engage with others, listen to and present various sides of an argument (knowing that there are rarely only

two sides) and achieve a satisfactory outcome for your business, your personal growth, and the industry. Advocacy through DEMA's Public Policy Committee and the involvement of the DEMA Membership works to keep the diving community informed and involved.

The entire Public Policy effort for 2024 can be readily seen in the pages of this Annual Report. Using virtual and in person meetings, many divers and diving professionals came together again this year to help advocate for the diving community. One DEMA focus was raising the alarm about a 2023 law that significantly increased cost for our community. In December 2022, Congress adopted Section 11503 of the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act, the Small Passenger Vessel Act (SPVA), **which removed longstanding liability limits and created retroactive liability exposure (2 years) for a subset of small businesses.** Notably, fishing vessels and cruise lines were exempted. In consultation with outside insurance actuaries, DEMA developed a solution that would help ensure vessels that are operating safely and lawfully are not unduly burdened with the threat of unlimited liability for an incident that may have occurred two years prior. The [DIVE BOAT Act](#) would:

- Reduce the lookback period for claims from two years to one year for overnight vessels, which is in line with how insurance premiums are assessed. (Up from the historic period of six months)
- Remove “day-boats” from the types of vessels subject to the current law’s heightened liability standards—reverting them back to the same standards as all other vessel operators, e.g., sport fishing, cruise lines, tow boats, etc.

These opportunities for DEMA Member involvement, from personal testimony to message-writing campaigns directly to lawmakers, tie us together and make

individual company efforts far more effective. Importantly, the voice DEMA brings to the legislative table through DEMA Members makes a difference to the environment and the regulatory situation, keeping dive sites protected and accessible to the diving community.

MEMBER RESEARCH DRIVES DEMA PROGRAMS—DIVING COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

Listening to the needs of Members is critical for the success of the industry and for DEMA. DEMA's own member-level research helps to establish programs and provides more engagement opportunities. In surveys DEMA Members have indicated their desire for DEMA to “Represent the field of recreational diving to the public.” This desired benefit shows up consistently in the top five most desired benefits when members are surveyed, even when members are segmented by time in the industry, experience, and other factors.

[The Diving Community Champions Award](#) recognizes DEMA Member Companies who are utilizing recreational diving to help advance society and their communities and who make these community efforts known to the general public. Criteria for Diving Community Champions include:



Reach of the Activity, Project, or Program

- Is the project or program local, national, or international in scope (all qualify)?
- How many were impacted by the nominated activity?
- How did the activity or project positively impact the DEMA Member business' communities or society?

All sizes and scopes of projects and activities are eligible, but the program should command appropriate resources to have the greatest possible reach; the size of the DEMA Member Company is considered when reviewing this criterion.

Positively Showcasing Recreational Diving to the General Public

- Does the program or project utilize recreational diving to demonstrate diving's significant contribution to the general public?
- Does the activity or project benefit recreational diving or depict diving in a positive light?

Realizing Objectives and Outcomes

Results should demonstrate how the program or project made a difference to the general public using recreational diving as a catalyst and achieving the company's defined and measurable objectives. The volunteer Diving Community Champions Review Committee selects the five finalists who are then voted upon by the DEMA membership.

More information on Diving Community Champions can be found in this Annual Report and [here](#).

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

This year DEMA has depended on available volunteers to keep essential committees and activities going. DEMA invites all volunteers to attend the DEMA Membership Meeting on Wednesday, November 20th at 8:30 AM Pacific time to be recognized for

their hard work during the year. We salute all volunteers and their effort to help grow the diving industry by working together.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- Dan Orr, Dan Orr Consulting, Chair
- William Cline, Cline Group Advertising Inc., Board Senior Vice Chair
- Steve Weaver, Dream Weaver Travel, Board Vice Chair
- Tom Leaird, Scuba Educators International, Board Secretary/Treasurer

FINANCE

- Brad Barnett, Clearly Cayman Dive Resorts
- Mike Hollis, Pro Asia
- Tom Leaird (Board Treasurer, Chair), Scuba Educators International
- Tim Webb, Caradonna Dive Adventures

MANUFACTURING

- Charlie Bush, Sherwood Scuba
- Patrick Danko, Garmin
- Tor Ericsson, Diving Unlimited International
- Mike Hollis (Chair), Pro Asia
- Tom Phillipp, XS Scuba/Sea Pearls

DEMA SHOW

- Jeff Cinciripino, Scuba Shack Diving Services
- Bill Cole, Sea Experience
- Jenny Collister (Chair), Reef and Rainforest
- Merial Curren, Patriots For Disabled Divers
- Lily Mak, Enchanted Sea Images
- Richard Thomas, International Scuba
- Tim Webb, Caradonna Dive Adventures

INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

- Jenny Collister, Reef and Rainforest
- Derik Crotts, Professional Scuba Schools (PSS)
- Terry Cummins, TC-IBC Consulting
- Bill Doran, Scuba Educators International
- Cassandra Johnson, Breezeway Bubbles Scuba
- Dan Orr, Dan Orr Consulting
- Arlindo Serrao, Portugal Dive
- Peter Symes (Chair), X-Ray Magazine
- Steve Weaver, Dream Weaver Travel

PUBLIC POLICY

- Frank Baquero, Pan Aqua Diving
- Stuart Cove, Stuart Cove's Dive Bahamas
- Patrick Danko, Garmin
- Jim Gunderson, Scuba Educators International
- Bob Harris, DEMA's Legislative Advocate in Florida
- Al Hornsby, PADI
- Tom Leaird, Scuba Educators International
- Dan Orr (Chair), Dan Orr Consulting
- Shana Phelan, Pura Vida Divers
- Carlos Santana, HIRSA

RESEARCH

- William Cline (Chair), Cline Group Advertising, Inc.
- Ben Collins, Garmin
- JoAnn Haack, Divers Alert Network
- Shelli Hendricks, Blue Horizons Solutions
- Jason Leggatt, Shearwater Research Inc.
- Lily Mak, Enchanted Sea Images
- Charles Maricle, XK Sports
- Jeff Mondle, PADI
- David Prichard, Enchanted Sea Images, Inc.
- Lee Rand, Avelo

RETAILER ENGAGEMENT

- Jennetta Adams, International Scuba
- Robin Bostater, Kaizen Scuba
- Jeff Cinciripino, Scuba Shack Diving Services
- Merial Currer (Chair), Patriots For Disabled Divers
- Patrick Hammer, Dive Right In Scuba
- Bob Hathaway, Odyssey Scuba & Travel, LLC
- Brooke Speedy, Leaird's Underwater Service
- Rich Thomas, International Scuba ■



DEMA MEMBER REWARDS PROGRAM

Launched in 2023, the [DEMA Rewards Program](#) incentivizes Members to engage with DEMA to benefit all Members and the Association. The program increases the value of membership by providing rewards that can be exchanged for future Membership discounts, merchandise, and even high-visibility sponsorships. The DEMA Board of Directors recognizes the value of “engagement” and the need to help Members connect through the Association. Under the DEMA Rewards Program, DEMA Members can earn rewards points while participating in the Association’s programs, including:

EXHIBITING

- Exhibiting at DEMA Show
- Staying in the DEMA Hotel Block
- Sponsoring at DEMA Show
- Speaking at an Exhibitor-Sponsored Seminar
- Attending Member Meeting

ATTENDING DEMA SHOW

- Staying in the DEMA Hotel Block
- Attending in-person DEMA-Sponsored Education
- Registering more than one person for the Show
- Attending Member Meeting

VOLUNTEERING

- Serving on the Board of Directors
- Serving on a Committee or Task Force
- Micro-volunteering service

ASSOCIATION PARTICIPATION

- Public Policy efforts
- Association research contributions
- Voting in DEMA Elections and Awards
- Contributing information to DEMA’s surveys and other activities

MEMBERSHIP

- Early annual renewal (must pay dues by 3/31)
- Using DEMA's benefits – such as DEMA's industry research or other items
- Provide secondary contact information in your Member Profile

Any DEMA Member company can earn up to 100 total DEMA Rewards points for the calendar/membership year. Members can earn points right away for some activities (e.g., membership renewal or voting), while other activities may be valued higher and require additional time and effort to complete (e.g., Committee and Board service). When points are

earned, DEMA inputs them into the company's Membership record so they can be redeemed. All points must be redeemed by June 30 of the following calendar year (company must be a current member at the time of redemption). Any unused Rewards Points expire after June 30th of the following calendar year.

DEMA thanks all Members for their participation and encourages all companies to engage with our diving community for the benefit of their own businesses and the industry. For complete details about the program, visit www.dema.org. ■





FINANCE COMMITTEE

TOM LEAIRD, CHAIR (BOARD TREASURER)

The Finance Committee provides oversight to all budgetary activities of the Association, reviews and recommends the budget for the fiscal year and reviews the Association's financial transactions.

DEMA's financial standards are developed using Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. In addition to following these high standards, DEMA also retains the services of an outside professional accounting firm to conduct an annual review of all financial activities of the Association, as well as periodic evaluations of financial data. The association's financials are available on www.dema.org for member review.

GIVING BACK TO THE INDUSTRY

One of the most important objectives of the Association is the opportunity to place money back into the diving industry for business purposes. Since January 2003, DEMA has carefully placed money into successful promotions and other business-related efforts that were then

evaluated for their return on the investment, using standard financial evaluation techniques.

DEMA considers funding many different projects and allocates funds to these projects taking the following into careful consideration:

PROJECTS MANAGED DIRECTLY BY DEMA (BOARD OR STAFF)

This is the most common type of project, usually involving extensive committee and Board discussion, plans and evaluation prior to implementation. Projects of this nature may be proposed internally or by an outside entity but are managed by DEMA Staff with Board supervision. As such:

1. Projects are under direct control of DEMA Board
2. Project costs can be more easily evaluated and controlled

3. Project success can be more easily and accurately measured
 4. Compliance with anti-trust regulations can be more easily monitored
 5. Compliance with association objectives and corporate standards can be more easily monitored
 6. Safety risks can be mitigated more easily
- Projects managed directly by DEMA require evaluation by DEMA staff, recommendations to the Board and Board approval.

PROJECTS NOT MANAGED BY DEMA

When projects not managed directly by DEMA staff are considered for DEMA funding, the following should be considered:

1. Projects are NOT under direct control of DEMA Board or staff. For this reason, additional information is required before approval of funding.
2. DEMA sets limits on funding to prevent cost overruns and expects periodic reports from the project management team.
3. Clear objectives and evaluation measures must be provided by the team managing the project prior to funding.
4. Written information must be provided to DEMA regarding the individuals involved, their qualifications to conduct the project, the responsibilities of each, and the terms, limits and conditions of the project.
5. Project proposals are reviewed by DEMA counsel prior to approval.
6. DEMA must be indemnified against losses, injuries, violations of anti-trust regulations and laws, and other issues appropriate to the project in question.
7. Projects must DIRECTLY benefit the diving industry overall.
8. Consideration should be given to DEMA member companies when appropriate.

9. Adequate liability insurance naming DEMA, staff and directors is required and should be incorporated into any funding agreement as appropriate.
10. Approved project funds can only be dispersed after a written agreement is executed.

Projects not directly managed by DEMA require evaluation by DEMA staff and, in some cases, may require evaluation by outside sources. Such evaluation by outside sources may involve additional cost to the team proposing the project prior to recommendations being given to the Board and prior to the necessary Board approval.

DEMA ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Pursuant to the Bylaws of the Diving Equipment and Marketing Association (DEMA), you are hereby notified that you have the right to receive a copy of the DEMA Annual Financial Report upon request.

This Annual Report and the Balance Sheet, Income Statement, and Statement of Changes in Financial Position constitute the DEMA Annual Financial Report. As Treasurer, I hereby certify that those accompanying documents were prepared from the books and records of DEMA. Financial Statements are available to DEMA members via www.dema.org and DEMA's Annual Report is posted each year on its website, as well.

The names and addresses of current members of DEMA are located at the DEMA Office at 6050 Santo Road, Suite 190, San Diego, CA 92124.

In 2024, DEMA engaged in no transactions which involved more than \$50,000, or aggregating more than \$50,000, with the same person, and in which any director or officer of DEMA or any holder of more than 10% of the voting power of DEMA had a direct or indirect financial interest.

In 2024, DEMA paid no loans, guaranties, indemnifications, or advances to any officer or director of DEMA. ■



DEMA SHOW COMMITTEE

JENNY COLLISTER, CHAIR

DEMA SHOW 2024: NOVEMBER 19-22, IN LAS VEGAS, NV

In 2024, DEMA Show will return to the Entertainment Capital of the World, Las Vegas, NV. In the city that never sleeps, show registrants will experience a world of opportunity and depths of possibility. With thousands of professionals in attendance from over 75 countries, you'll need all the time you can get to experience everything the Show and Las Vegas have to offer. Level up your DEMA Show experience with important show features, including Author's Corner, DEMA Central, the DEMA Show Undersea Grand Prix, the First-Time Exhibitors Center, New Product Showcase, Silent Auction, Resource Center Snapshot Sessions, and so much more. Plan your schedule wisely because, with over 300 education opportunities, you won't have a second to waste!

The 2024 DEMA Show Committee consists of DEMA Members with an interest, experience, and





an understanding of trade shows and the needs of exhibitors and attendees. The 2024 DEMA Show Committee included Jenny Collister (Chair), Reef and Rainforest; Jeff Cinciripino, Scuba Shack Diving Services; Bill Cole, Sea Experience; Merial Currer, Patriot Scuba; Lily Mak, Enchanted Sea Images; Richard Thomas, International Scuba; and Tim Webb, Caradonna Dive Adventures.

In 2024, the committee was tasked with providing feedback on the new demashow.com platform, reviewing the DEMA Show/F1 Town Halls and providing recommendations for additional actions to assist DEMA Show attendees and exhibitors, reviewing the DEMA Show 2023 attendee and exhibitor surveys and providing recommendations for the 2024 surveys, submitting core artwork recommendations for DEMA Show 2025 and other pertinent



items as needed. The committee also reviewed DEMA Show venue selection and timing data and will continue to monitor future dates and locations as required.

DEMA SHOW TIMING AND LOCATION SELECTION

DEMA Show locations and timing are determined using Attendee and Exhibitor surveys and by researching convention center and hotel availability. Because DEMA Show is one of the largest trade shows in the United States, there are a limited number of convention facilities large enough to hold the annual event. When evaluating and selecting the convention facilities, city, and hotels, DEMA uses Board-approved criteria, including:

- The city must have cultural or entertainment attractions and special event venues appealing to the diving professional. A variety of restaurants and other entertainment should be within a 10-minute walking distance of the host hotel/convention center.
- The Show city must be a significant airline destination for the North Americas. The city should have a substantial number of direct flights coming into the city, with good connections from international hubs on the East and West Coasts, or itself be a hub city with substantial air lift making the Show easily accessible to a wide audience of dive professionals.
- The city's "Blended" labor rates must be within 10% of the median average compared to the convention industry market average for the previous five years.
- The convention facility must meet DEMA's exhibit and meeting space requirements and be located near major hotels, an international airport, and city points of interest. The minimum convention center size is 500,000 gross square feet.

- The convention facility must include a minimum of 30 meeting rooms in the convention center, capable of holding at least 50 to 100 people using classroom-style seating.
- First-class hotels must be convenient to the convention and exhibit facilities for up to 10,000 attendees. Hotel facilities should accommodate a minimum of 1,000 to 1,200 rooms peak night pick up, with 3,000 minimum total room nights required within DEMA's block. This number of hotel rooms must be within a 5-mile radius/15-minute travel time (whichever is less) of the convention center. In 2024, after consultation with the DEMA Show Committee and Board of Directors, DEMA contracted thousands of additional hotel nights to accommodate attendees and exhibitors due to the presence of the Formula 1 race taking place immediately following DEMA Show.

SUSTAINABILITY AND DEMA SHOW

DEMA continues to select convention facilities that help ensure DEMA Show is a sustainable event.

Contracting with the Las Vegas Convention Center in Las Vegas, NV; the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, FL; and the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in New Orleans, LA is purposeful in that these convention facilities are diligent in their efforts to reduce waste and negative environmental impact.

The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA), which operates the Las Vegas Convention Center, is committed to sustainable strategies that create superior customer experiences. The LVCVA has a Climate Action Plan that is more than just a method to reach carbon neutrality, it is an affirmation of its commitment not only to produce world-class events but to do so in an environmentally conscious way. Click [here](#) to learn more. Together

with its resort partners' business operations, the LVCVA is committed to minimizing waste and conserving natural resources.

DEMA SHOW NAMED IN TRADE SHOW EXECUTIVE'S FASTEST 50

Trade Show Executive recognized DEMA Show 2023 as one of the **Next 50 Fastest Growing Shows – By Net Square Feet of Exhibit Space**.

This recognition is critical because it helps DEMA negotiate for good hotel and convention center rates in selected destinations. The DEMA Show Committee and DEMA Board of Directors are grateful for the diving industry's support, which in turn helps everyone attend and exhibit at future DEMA Shows at the lowest possible cost. ■







MANUFACTURING COMMITTEE

MIKE HOLLIS, CHAIR

The Manufacturers' Committee represents all member manufacturers. Representatives on the Manufacturers' Committee come from the DEMA Board and can also include non-Board members.

The Manufacturing Fund originated from a DEMA bylaws Article included when the "New DEMA" was formed in 1994. Instead of DEMA being a Manufacturers Association (The Diving Equipment Manufacturers Association) the "New DEMA" (The Diving Equipment and Marketing Association) includes five different Class A voting membership stakeholders as well as one "Associate" (or Class B) membership for affiliated companies:

Class A Memberships:

- Class A-1 Manufacturers and Distributors of Diving Equipment

- Class A-2 Diver Certification and Training Agencies
- Class A-3 Diving Publications, Media, Diving Industry Consultants, Associations and Non-retail Service Providers
- Class A-4 Retail Distribution of Diving Goods and Services
- Class A-5 Dive Travel and Resorts

Class B Associate, Allied and Sustaining Memberships:

Associate, Allied and Sustaining Memberships are those organizations, firms, partnerships, associations or individuals who are ineligible for any other classes of Membership, and which subscribe to the Objects and Purposes of the Association. This class of Membership is entitled to all rights of Membership other than the right to vote and the right to hold an elected office.

FUND AMOUNT

The Manufacturing Fund is equal to five percent (5%) of the gross revenues derived by the Association from the trade show conducted during the previous year. The amount added to the fund varies annually, based on the success of that year's trade show.

THE NEED FOR A MANUFACTURING COMMITTEE

The Manufacturing Fund is used for the benefit of the association, membership and members by the Class A-1 Division of Manufacturers and Distributors, through a committee of not less than two members which shall be appointed by the Class A-1 Division Directors, and which shall include both Class A-1 Directors.

In 2024, the A-1 Board Directors added three additional Committee members from the

A-1 community to assist in soliciting and reviewing potential funding projects.

The allocation of the funds follows a Board-approved process, and the Manufacturers' Committee has been supportive of many different initiatives over the years.

In 2024, the Manufacturers' Fund allocated \$100,000 in assistance for the industry which included funding of fees and expenses associated with:

1. Federal Advocacy Lobbyist
2. State Advocacy Lobbyist in the Top Diving States
3. Various Consumer Research Projects
4. DEMA Show Prop 65 Consultations ■



PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE

DAN ORR, CHAIR

Each year DEMA establishes a Public Policy Committee which includes DEMA Board members, DEMA Member volunteers and DEMA staff. The Committee works directly with the DEMA Office to review U.S. federal and state issues, and international issues when needed. The Committee gathers input on various issues from Members of the diving community and provides commentary and data to government officials and organizations through the DEMA staff.

The 2024 Public Policy Committee included Frank Baquero, Pan Aqua Diving; Stuart Cove, Stuart Cove's Dive Bahamas; Patrick Danko, Garmin; Jim Gunderson, Scuba Educators International; Bob Harris, DEMA Legislative Advocate; Al Hornsby, PADI; Tom Leaird, Scuba Educators International; Dan Orr (Chair), Dan Orr Consulting; Shana Phelan, Pura Vida Divers; Carlos Santana, Hawaiian Islands Retail Scuba Association; and Bob Harris, DEMA's Legislative Advocate in Florida.

The Public Policy Committee engages in legislative and regulatory activities which promote the health of aquatic resources while protecting diver access to those resources; DEMA's Public Policy goals include keeping dive sites accessible to divers, reducing, or managing government regulation, and keeping dive locations clean and healthy. The Committee advocates for protection of the underwater environment, and actively monitors federal & state legislation and government administrative activities in the U.S. and globally to help mitigate adverse legislation which may impact diving businesses, may adversely impact the diving environment, or may restrict access to dive sites.

A key element of DEMA's Public Policy work is to review advocacy issues with a global perspective; for example, if an issue in Florida could have an impact on the recreational diving industry in another country, or another U.S. state or territory, DEMA may pursue action recommended by the Committee. Legislative advocacy often requires

substantial association resources (time and money), but advocacy through DEMA's Public Policy Committee is critical in that it provides all DEMA Members worldwide with a direct voice in the legislative and regulatory process.

THE INDUSTRY NEEDS DEMA MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE!

Public Policy is an area where Members can have a direct impact on the Industry while engaging with DEMA. When DEMA publicly comments or acts on potential legislation DEMA Members receive notifications regarding changes to legislation or regulation. While the DEMA organization can act as an industry voice in legislation, the better strategy is to have Members comment directly to their government officials on important issues – numbers commenting make a difference. One of the aims of this effort is to provide such notification far enough in advance of legislative action for Members to act alongside DEMA, multiplying the impact of DEMA's advocacy activities.

It is also important to note that attempts to influence legislation may be unsuccessful; some favored legislation may not pass out of the legislative body or committee, or an unfavorable bill or regulation may become law or regulation despite objections from DEMA or industry participants. In the U.S. especially, this is an expected part of the process. But bringing forth the voices of DEMA Members is still the best way to participate in the regulatory and legislative process; sitting on the sidelines most certainly won't change the diving industry for the better.

To the extent possible, the Public Policy Committee reports legislative activity to the DEMA Membership so that they stay informed of issues that relate to the industry, including business-related activities. In 2024, DEMA continued to publish the DEMA Public Policy Digest, a monthly e-newsletter that reports on issues impacting recreational diving. DEMA

solicits input from Committee members and DEMA Members for this e-newsletter, and all members can reach out to DEMA at publicpolicy@dema.org for input on the Digest, or for advocacy issues impacting their business.

DEMA ADVOCACY POSITION STATEMENTS FOR 2024

DEMA has adopted the following advocacy Position Statements representing the legislative platform for the association. The Public Policy Committee is responsible for making recommendations on Position Statements to the Board of Directors and adopting positions that address these approved Position Statements.

Business Management. DEMA supports legislation that eases regulatory and financial burdens on diving businesses of all sizes.

Communications. DEMA supports legislation to protect the right of all businesses to communicate with their customers and to the public at large in furtherance of their purposes. Forms of communication that are considered within this Position Statement include email, telephone, regular mail, fax, mobile and text, all forms of social media, and internet.

Employment Practices. DEMA supports flexibility in employment practices for all diving businesses, and advocates for legislation that supports flexibility or reduces restrictive employment practices for DEMA members. Employment practices on which DEMA supports flexibility include number of work hours; wages; non-exempt vs exempt employees; rules regarding independent contractor vs employees; remote employment procedures, and other labor practices.

Environmental Issues. DEMA supports reforms that promote the health of aquatic resources while protecting diver access to those resources, promoting, and sustaining clean and healthy places to dive.



Health Insurance. DEMA and the diving business community support legislation that promotes cost effective employee health insurance programs when such programs are without undue regulation or penalty.

Safety. DEMA supports reforms that help keep divers safe both at the surface and underwater, but which protect diver access to the aquatic realm.

Workers Compensation Insurance. DEMA supports reforms that simplify the workers compensation system, make workers compensation insurance more affordable for businesses while maintaining high quality services to the injured, and support our members' need to access affordable workers compensation insurance programs.

Insurance and Liability Protection. DEMA supports reforms that generally improve the defensibility of dive product and service providers and supports the long-term viability and availability of diving-related business and professional insurance.

Scuba Diving and Snorkeling. DEMA supports legislative and regulatory efforts to grow and expand recreational diving and snorkeling.

Fair Government Practices. DEMA supports government programs that help grow the diving industry, reduce regulatory burdens, or provide business or consumer incentives for participation. DEMA seeks to include recreational diving in government-based programs when beneficial programs that assist non-diving activities are proposed or already exist.

2024 DEMA ADVOCACY

During 2024, DEMA devoted resources to numerous and significant diving-related advocacy issues. With so many advocacy issues during 2024, there is insufficient space to list all of them in this report. Several important issues are presented here for member review, and information on all of DEMA's 2024 advocacy issues can be obtained through prior issues of DEMA's [Public Policy Digest](#). Issued monthly at no cost to subscribers, this e-publication provides a brief overview of some of the important topics impacting members of the diving community each month, and emphasizes how these legislative issues impact recreational diving. [A free subscription can be found here.](#)

Among the Advocacy Issues for 2024 are:

- The Corporate Transparency Act is Now in Effect
- The Loper Bright Case – Supreme Court Ruling on Chevron, and the Impact on Business Regulation
- White House Announces Strategies to Advance Sustainable Ocean Management
- Department of Labor Rule: Exempt Employees Overtime Pay
- DEMA Board Supports the FISHES Act
- Reese's Law and the Diving Industry – Affecting Devices Using Button and Coin Batteries
- Help Fight Rising U.S. Insurance Rates by Joining the DIVE BOAT Act Social Media Campaign
- Help Support for the Education and Workforce Freedom Act

The Corporate Transparency Act is Now in Effect

Impact on Recreational Diving:

Almost all small businesses in the recreational diving industry domiciled or operating in the U.S. MUST COMPLY with these new federal regulations, which require providing the personal information of business owners and beneficiaries to the federal government.

Background

The Corporate Transparency Act (CTA) went into effect on January 1, 2024, impacting millions of small businesses across the U.S. Signed into law under the current administration in 2021, CTA purportedly was enacted to “prevent corrupt and other actors from laundering illicit funds through anonymous companies in the United States. This effort will equip law enforcement and other partners with the information they need to disrupt financial anonymity that enables crimes such as corruption, drug trafficking, and terrorism.”

According to the U.S. Treasury, “CTA requires many companies formed or operating in the United States to report information about their beneficial owners to Treasury’s Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN), which will store this sensitive information in a secure, confidential database.” Businesses that meet the specified criteria are considered a “Reporting Company,” and must submit a [Beneficial Ownership Information Report \(BOIR\)](#) to the Department of Treasury FinCEN and may incur criminal or civil penalties for not filing or updating this report.

The CTA requires many U.S. entities to disclose their individual beneficial owners in a report filed with the U.S. Treasury. The CTA statute was enacted in 2021. Its regulations require many entities formed in 2024 to report beneficial ownership information within 90 days of formation. The CTA requires many entities formed prior to 2024 to report beneficial ownership information by January 1, 2025.

In March 2024, the U.S. District Court for the [Northern District of Alabama ruled that the Corporate Transparency Act \(“CTA”\) is unconstitutional](#). Since that time the case has been appealed to the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals, in Atlanta. Parties have submitted briefs, and a decision is expected prior to January 1, 2025. Regardless of whether the 11th Circuit upholds the law as unconstitutional, it is likely headed to the US Supreme Court.

The decision by the Alabama federal court only applies to the Plaintiffs in the case, Mr. Wilkins, and members of the National Small Business Association (NSBA). The federal judge hearing the case could have issued an injunction nationwide, but he did not. Therefore, for all other businesses in the U.S., the law remains in effect.

One of the arguments made by the US Government in support of the law has concerned many small businesses. They argued that the

law was constitutional because Congress has the right under its taxing authority to know which persons might owe taxes. The law was presented to stop terrorists and money laundering, but the real impact for small businesses will be on April 15th of each year.

Because the March injunction was not issued nationwide, all other entities that are reporting companies under the CTA are still required to report their beneficial owners to FinCEN within the required deadlines (i.e., ninety days for entities formed or registered to do business in 2024, and thirty days for entities formed or registered thereafter).

Deadline Approaching Fast: Which Companies Must File?

Reporting companies created before January 1, 2024, will have until January 1, 2025, to comply. A “Reporting Company” is defined as a corporation, limited liability company (LLC), or any other privately held company, **whether domestic or foreign, registered to conduct business in the U.S. with the Secretary of State or similar office.** Publicly traded companies do not fall under the CTA, as they are subject to their own reporting requirements.

- A domestic reporting company is defined as any entity that is a corporation, a limited liability company, or is created by the filing of a document with a Secretary of State or similar office under the law of a state or Indian tribe.
- A foreign reporting company is defined as any entity that is a corporation, a limited liability company, or other entity formed under the law of a foreign country and registered to do business in any state or tribal jurisdiction by the filing of a document with a Secretary of State or similar office under the law of a state or Indian tribe.

What Entities are Exempt and are NOT REQUIRED to File a BOIR Report?

There are 23 exemptions. Most are for companies that are already subject to substantial federal or state regulation under which their beneficial ownership may already be known. **Most recreational diving businesses domiciled or doing business in the U.S. will be required to file.** [A detailed list of exemptions can be found here.](#)

If your company is not an LLC or corporation, contact your legal counsel to determine whether your business falls under the definition of a reporting company.

Who is a Beneficial Owner? What Information Is Required?

A beneficial owner is any individual who owns or controls at least 25% of an organization, or directly or indirectly exercises substantial control in any of the following roles:

- They serve as a senior officer, such as a president, CEO, or general counsel.
- They have the authority to appoint or remove senior officers, board members, or other similar roles.
- They make important decisions concerning the company’s business, finances, and/or structure.

Eligible small businesses will need to report the following information about their companies:

- The full legal name of the company.
- The company’s business address. P.O. boxes or lawyer’s/adviser’s offices cannot be accepted.
- The state or Tribal jurisdiction where the company was formed or first registered.
- The [taxpayer identification number](#) and an identity document, such as a filed Articles of Incorporation or Organization.

Corporate transparency reports must also include the below information about any beneficial owners:

- Their full legal name and date of birth.
- Their home address. P.O. boxes or lawyer's/ adviser's offices cannot be accepted.
- A photocopy of their U.S. driver's license or passport.

Once you have identified any beneficial owners, contact each to inform them that the CTA requires your business to report their personal information to FinCEN. Beneficial owners can choose to [apply for a FinCEN Identifier and provide information to FinCEN directly](#). If the beneficial owner chooses to send the information directly, you have them download a copy of the blank BOIR form as a PDF [here](#) and fill in the information. They can then upload the completed PDF using [this page](#) (Adobe Acrobat required). Otherwise, they can send the necessary information directly to you (the company) to be included in your business's beneficial ownership information report.

By What Date is Filing Required?

A reporting company created or registered to do business before January 1, 2024, will have until January 1, 2025, to file its initial beneficial ownership information report.

A reporting company created or registered on or after January 1, 2024, and before January 1, 2025, will have 90 calendar days after receiving notice of the company's creation or registration to file its initial BOI report. This 90-calendar day deadline runs from the time the company receives actual notice that its creation or registration is effective, or after a secretary of state or similar office first provides public notice of its creation or registration, whichever is earlier.

Reporting companies created or registered on or after January 1, 2025, will have 30 calendar days from actual or public notice that the

company's creation or registration is effective to file their initial BOI reports with FinCEN.

Future Updates

FinCEN is engaging in an outreach and education campaign to establish awareness. These efforts include continually issuing guidance available at www.fincen.gov/boi, multimedia resources, webinars and events, and a widespread public awareness campaign incorporating key stakeholder engagement. Businesses should subscribe to these updates to be sure of any changes.

The Loper Bright Case – Supreme Court Ruling on the Chevron Deference, and the Impact on Business Regulation

[Impact on Recreational Diving:](#)

The recent Supreme Court ruling in the Loper Bright case, involving federal regulations imposed on small business, may have an impact on the regulatory environment and cost to operate for diving and other businesses. Dive operators, stores and equipment suppliers should watch future rulemaking by federal agencies to see if the required steps for adoptions of agency rules and regulations, are followed.

In recent years U.S. federal regulators have built up a cache of rules and mandates that impose significantly higher costs on businesses, American families, and the U.S. economy. Despite the widespread impact on the economy, regulators and the politicians that empower them often undervalue the true costs of creating these sweeping federal rules.

It is within this regulatory environment that the case of [Loper Bright v. Raimondo](#) arrived before the Supreme Court. In that case, a group of family-run fishing businesses challenged a costly rule that required them to pay for third-party federal regulation monitors that cost up to \$700 per day per ship, amounting to up to 20% of a ship's take-home pay. Loper Bright challenged this regulation, and the ensuing case was eventually taken up by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Background

Since 2021, at least 923 federal rules have been finalized, projected to cost more than \$1.6 trillion. Nearly \$1.2 trillion of these were finalized so far in 2024. Such new regulations impose increased costs to families (on items like health care) and to small businesses. New regulations from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) alone are projected to cost some \$870 billion, adding to the already-expensive impacts of inflation.

Other costly rules imposed in the current regulatory environment include new “[Corporate Transparency Act](#)” (CTA) reporting requirements for businesses (\$84 billion), PFAS drinking water regulations (\$63.4 billion), staffing and transparency requirements for Medicare and Medicaid (\$43.1 billion), and emissions standards for heavy-duty vehicles and engines (\$39 billion). Professor Casey Mulligan of the University of Chicago for the Committee to Unleash Prosperity examined the impact that the current regulations will have on families. [The report](#) found that new administrative/regulatory rules imposed since 2021 have led to almost \$10,000 in added present and future costs for the average household, which could reach \$60,000 per household if the same rate of regulator increases remains unchecked.

An [independent study published in 2023](#) found that, when accounting for compliance costs and the economic impact, federal regulations cost more than \$1.9 trillion annually. That dollar value represents about 7% of the United States’ Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and is nearly five times the value of corporate taxes collected by the federal government in 2023 (\$409 billion).

Where Did These Regulations Originate?

The Administrative Procedure Act (APA) was passed by Congress in 1946. In the aftermath of the significant expansion of federal administrative agencies during the New Deal, the APA sought to regulate the activity of these agencies in two ways. First, the APA established procedures for agency rulemaking and adjudication. Second, the APA

codified the bases on which federal courts may set aside an agency’s action or determinations. In doing so the APA required courts to defer to agencies unless their actions were “arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion, or otherwise not in accordance with law.” Courts were required to accept agency factual findings unless they were “unsupported by substantial evidence.”

This framework changed in 1984, when the Supreme Court imposed a limitation on review of agency legal conclusions. [Chevron v. Natural Resources Defense Council](#) involved a challenge to the EPA’s decision to regulate all pieces of equipment in each facility as a single “stationary source” of pollution under the Clean Air Act, rather than regulating each individual piece of equipment as a separate stationary source. Theoretically, this eased the burden on regulated companies: under this interpretation, a company did not need to obtain a permit before making modifications to individual pieces of equipment within the equipment cluster. At that time, the Court concluded that the statute did not offer a clear definition of “stationary source.” The Court held that, so long as the agency’s interpretation of an ambiguous or unclear statutory provision was “reasonable,” it was “entitled to deference” under the assumption that judges are not “experts in the field.” Agencies, by contrast, were supposed to have subject-matter expertise. In cases where Congress has not clearly spoken, then, the Court held it was appropriate for agencies, rather than the courts, to decide which statutory interpretation best reconciles “manifestly competing interests.”

Importantly, the so-called Chevron deference was never about agencies’ authority to set standards or make policy determinations based on the discretion that Congress expressly delegates. Instead, Chevron operated only in the relatively narrow class of cases where a court disagreed with an agency’s statutory interpretation that was nonetheless “reasonable.” The Chevron deference applied only to agency interpretations of ambiguous law—specifically,

to agency interpretations of congressional statutes that are “‘silent or ambiguous with respect to the specific issue’ at hand.”

The Loper Bright Case

In the Loper Bright case, a group of family-run fishing businesses challenged a costly rule that required them to pay for third-party federal regulation monitors that cost up to \$700 per day per ship, amounting to up to 20% of a ship's take-home pay. The Supreme Court examined the case and overturned Chevron, allowing federal courts to draw their own conclusions about the correct legal interpretation of otherwise ambiguous federal statutes.

Loper Bright is not a complete rejection of agency expertise or authority. There are many areas where federal courts are still required to give significant deference to agency action, including discretionary agency action or agency fact-finding. Although Loper Bright is one of a series of decisions in which the current Supreme Court has pared back the flexibility and power of administrative agencies, this ruling may not always serve to allow a challenge to federal agency rulemaking and authority. Loper Bright's application is limited to specific situations, but the Loper Bright case may have the effect of reining in some of the federal bureaucracy created by federal administrative agencies, reducing costs to businesses and households alike.

You can read more about the [Loper Bright case here](#).

White House Announces Strategies to Advance Sustainable Ocean Management

Impact on Recreational Diving:

These Executive strategies could impact the environment in which we all conduct our diving businesses and may add challenges to dive site access as more regulation is considered or enacted. As Executive level actions these strategies are not under the direct oversight of the U.S. Congress,

and the diving industry is advised to watch these important issues and efforts as they progress.

Source: [National Ocean Policy Coalition](#).

In June the **White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP)** [announced](#) three strategies “to advance sustainable ocean management” and “advance U.S. President Biden’s program said to conserve and protect the ocean...”

OSTP Director and Chief Advisor on Science and Technology Arati Prabhakar said the reports “point the way to work with this precious natural resource to address inequities and injustice, and to meet the challenges of the climate crisis and biodiversity loss,” while **White House Council on Environmental Quality Chair Brenda Mallory** said the reports “help us better understand how to achieve our shared conservation and ecosystem restoration goals and integrate climate action and environmental justice into a sustainable ocean economy.”

Readers are advised to review these important documents related to these administrative/Executive strategies:

- [National Strategy for a Sustainable Ocean Economy](#) (Sustainable Ocean Plan)
- [National Ocean Biodiversity Strategy](#)
- [National Aquatic Environmental DNA Strategy](#)

[National Strategy for a Sustainable Ocean Economy](#) (Sustainable Ocean Plan)

Developed by the [Ocean Policy Committee](#) in response to the United States’ [accession](#) in 2021 to the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy and the consequent commitment to develop a sustainable ocean plan within 5 years, the Strategy notes that implementation of the “while-of-government vision” to **guide the U.S. ocean agenda through 2029 will occur through ongoing federal efforts, with**

a focus on conserving, protecting, restoring, and maintaining healthy ocean and coastal ecosystems, supporting resilient people and communities, and advancing sustainable and just economic development.

It adds that the Ocean Policy Committee and its subcommittees will include high-level actions in future work plans to support implementation of the Strategy, which it says will enable a sustainable ocean economy that will “increase the quality of life for all Americans and ensure marine and coastal ecosystems and economies will survive and thrive.”

Goal: Conserve, Protect, Restore, and Maintain Healthy Ecosystems

Noting that marine wildlife, biodiversity, and ocean ecosystems are threatened by marine resource extraction, habitat degradation, and anthropogenic stressors, the Strategy identifies key opportunities for action including the following:

- Create, connect, strengthen, and expand ecologically connected marine protected areas and marine protected area networks. Promote international action and global ambition to conserve or protect at least 30% of ocean waters by 2030 and halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030.
- Fully implement the U.S. National Strategy to Develop Statistics for Environmental-Economic Decisions (Natural Capital Accounting).
- Fully implement the National Ocean Biodiversity Strategy.
- Complete and build on the National Natural Assessment.
- Improve scientific understanding of deep-sea ecosystems and continue to consider policies and regulations appropriate to potential seabed mineral resource development that promote strong scientific, environmental,

labor, tribal consultation, and indigenous and community engagement standards.

- Continue to strive toward integrated, ecosystem-based approaches for ocean uses, including continued sustainable management of federally managed fisheries, reduction of bycatch, offshore wind energy regulation, sustainable aquaculture, green shipping, and subsea cables.
- Mitigate underwater noise associated with shipping, energy development, and other marine industrial activity through applicable regulatory measures, new technology, funding to incentivize innovation, and implementing strategies like NOAA’s Ocean Noise Strategy.
- Track and model shifting habitat and species compositions.
- Conserve, protect, enhance, and sustainably manage existing blue carbon habitats through expanded research, exploration, and mapping.
- Develop responsible regulatory frameworks for emerging tools and technologies like offshore carbon sequestration, marine carbon dioxide removal, and green hydrogen.

Goal: Support Resilient People and Communities

Noting that communities that “experience disproportionate and adverse human health or environmental burdens as a result of inequitable access to clean water, air, and natural places, as well as underinvestment in basic infrastructure and services, are further disadvantaged due to the cumulative impacts of these exposures and other stressors such as climate change,” the Strategy identifies key opportunities for action including the following:

- Prioritize consideration of ancestrally, culturally, historically, and traditionally important areas while considering food

security in conservation designations, offshore energy developments, environmental reviews, and other coastal planning decisions.

- Continue to identify nationally significant natural and cultural ocean areas for recognition or protection through designations of national marine sanctuaries, national estuary programs, national wildlife refuges, and national marine monuments.
- Designate and manage marine protected areas as informed by indigenous knowledge, as appropriate.
- Adopt and enforce hazard-resistant building codes.
- Expand use of actionable social vulnerability and socioeconomic data and encourage linkages between existing social science databases to identify communities that may need assistance preparing for, responding to, or recovering from extreme weather events.
- Meet emerging and existing needs of employers in sectors such as shipping, offshore energy, and ocean observing, while helping workers find high-quality jobs.

Goal: Advance Sustainable and Just Economic Development

Stating that “transformational research, development of new technologies, partnerships across sectors, and a skilled workforce are required to significantly advance ocean sustainability and climate solutions,” the Strategy identifies key opportunities for action including:

- Continue to identify responsible offshore wind and marine energy areas.
- Expand establishment of green shipping corridors.

- Develop and implement a U.S. Maritime Decarbonization Action Plan.
- Use evolving science and ecosystem-based fishery management to support sustainable U.S. wild capture production.
- Prevent overfishing in federally managed fisheries, work to reduce bycatch, and develop global partnerships to reduce overfishing of stocks that cross national boundaries.
- Build and sustain climate-ready fisheries.
- Support diverse and sustainably managed aquaculture through a regulatory approach to considers and mitigates impacts on wild stocks, protected resources, essential fish habitat, and marine ecosystems, and continue negotiating, developing, and integrating updated guidelines for sustainable aquaculture.
- Use information-sharing and technologies to combat [illegal, unreported and unregulated \(IUU\)](#) fishing.
- Upgrade port infrastructure to improve resilience against climate change effects.
- Cross-cutting efforts include leveraging partnerships across multiple scales and sectors and collaboration to produce data that supports regional-level management, as well as engaging internationally, including:
 - Advancing U.S. priorities regarding the Agreement under the **UN Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction**, and
 - Actively engaging the **International Seabed Authority** for an

international regulatory framework that “effectively protects the marine environment alongside the U.S. seabed minerals regime.”

National Ocean Biodiversity Strategy

Developed by the National Science & Technology Council’s **Interagency Working Group on Biodiversity** of the Subcommittee on Ocean Science & Technology, the Strategy provides a roadmap to strengthen U.S. capacity to monitor U.S. ocean biodiversity and expand public-private sector coordination in support of existing mandates to conserve, restore, and sustainably managing living ocean resources.

Next steps include the Subcommittee on Ocean Science & Technology’s development of an Implementation Plan to describe and direct specific actions to implement the Strategy, which it says will “enable evidence-based management and protection of the ocean,” among other things.

Among other things, the Strategy notes that emerging ocean uses including offshore renewable energy development, marine carbon dioxide removal, seabed mineral exploration and extraction, and aquaculture are “proceeding with inadequate knowledge of the species and habitats that may be affects an in some cases without well-established regulatory frameworks to determine and avoid impacts on biodiversity.” It also cites the need for “more work to conserve a geographically representative, ecologically connected, and climate-resilient set of marine areas off all U.S. coasts” and strategies that include additional marine sanctuaries, refuges, and monuments, and states that the administration’s initiative to value natural assets (natural capital accounting), combined with emerging markets for biodiversity, “would support measures to require market players to consider the economic costs of degrading biodiversity in decision making, and help put more accurate prices on activities that harm

biodiversity, making the hidden costs of nature degradation explicit in policy and markets.”

Goal: Drive Delivery of Ocean Biodiversity Knowledge at the National Scale

In support of this goal, the Strategy calls for the establishment of a coordination mechanism across agencies and sectors for federal ocean biodiversity efforts, development of an implementation plan that includes listening sessions and tribal consultations, and identification of key gaps in ocean biodiversity knowledge and coordination between the development of marine and ecosystem natural capital account statistics and ocean biodiversity efforts.

Goal: Strengthen Tools and Institutions to Deliver Ocean Biodiversity Knowledge

In support of this goal, the Strategy calls for establishing a robust, interoperable pipeline for ocean biodiversity information, harnessing science and technology to accelerate access to biodiversity knowledge (including through the National Aquatic eDNA Strategy, and rebuilding and expanding human capital and infrastructure for biodiversity science.

Goal: Protect, Conserve, Restore, and Sustainably Use Ocean Biodiversity

In support of this goal, the Strategy calls for expanding and delivering biodiversity knowledge for ocean conservation, restoration, and sustainable development, establishing and incentivizing diverse partnerships across scales and sectors (including through listening sessions), and inspiring, educating, and involving the public to discover and value ocean life.

National Aquatic Environmental DNA Strategy

Developed by the National Science & Technology Council’s **eDNA Task Team** of the Interagency Working Group on Biodiversity of the Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology, the Strategy clarifies sectors where

federal investment in aquatic eDNA research can accelerate research and development for biological monitoring, improve information content, encourage partnerships, and help foster job creation. It adds that application of an eDNA “toolkit” could increase efficiencies, reduce costs, harmonize protocols, and deliver improved, enhanced information across multiple agency missions and mandates, with the Strategy being a “pillar of implementation” for the National Strategy for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, National Ocean Biodiversity Strategy, and National Nature Assessment.

The Strategy is focused on the following goals and associated objectives:

- Coordinate Across Sectors to Facilitate Integration of Aquatic eDNA into Decision Making.
- Coordinate Across Agencies to Align the National Aquatic eDNA Community.
- Promote Aquatic eDNA Standards and Best Practices.
- Disseminate Unified Messaging to Advance Technical Insights.
- Build Capacity, Infrastructure, and the Research Enterprise Needed to Employ Aquatic eDNA Technology at Scale
- Build Human Capacity via Education and Training.
- Enhance Infrastructure to Meet Technical Demands.
- Support Continued Research and Development to Address Priority Science and Technology Needs.
- Advance Coordinated Aquatic eDNA Observations to Aid Assessments in U.S. Waters.
- Identify Priority Sites and Applications for Aquatic eDNA Sampling.
- Implement Technological Advances

to Build Operational Capacity.

- Operationalize Biological Resource Data for Societal Benefit.

Next steps include development of a set of implementation plans to achieve the Strategy’s goals and objectives.

Source: [*National Ocean Policy Coalition*](#)

U.S. Department of Labor Rule: Exempt Employees Overtime Pay

Impact on Recreational Diving:

The new overtime/exempt employee rules include substantial increases to the salary threshold below which workers – often regardless of their title – must be paid overtime. These increases are of such magnitude that they could drastically affect diving company budgets and interfere with plans to retain employees.

Starting July 1, 2024, employers with “exempt” employees making less than the new minimum salary for exempt workers will need to determine how to stay within the new Department of Labor (DOL) rules. Some employers have indicated they will raise the salaries of workers so that they can remain exempt, while others have reacted by re-classifying employees as non-exempt. Each of these courses of action will come with financial and other consequences.

What are the New Rules?

The new overtime/exempt rules raise the standard “exempt threshold” salary in two steps – one going into effect on July 1, 2024, and the other on January 1, 2025. The first step moves the exempt threshold from its current \$684 per week (equivalent to \$35,568 per year) to \$844 per week (equivalent to \$43,888 per year) – a whopping 23% increase. The second step on January 1, 2025, will raise the threshold even more - to \$1,128 per week (equivalent to \$58,656 per year). This is an additional 34% from the July 1 threshold, and a 65% total increase over the current (pre-July

2024) threshold. Workers with salaries below these thresholds must be paid overtime, even if they are classified as a manager or professional.

According to the new rules, following implementation in January 2025, there will be automatic increases to the salary threshold every three years. [Non-discretionary bonuses and incentives](#), including commissions paid annually (or more frequently) can be used to satisfy up to 10% of the new standard salary threshold.

Do the new rules permit exempt classification of workers?

Yes, but to be considered exempt from overtime under the new Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) rules, workers falling into the classification of “Executive, Administrative & Professional” (EAP) must be paid minimal threshold salary amount AND must meet [standard duties tests](#) for at least one of these categories. The 2024 duties tests have not been changed from those implemented in 2016 and 2019.

If workers are paid less than the salary threshold OR do not meet the prescribed duties tests, they must be paid 1.5 times their regular hourly rate if they work for more than 40 hours in a workweek.

How Can an Employer Claim a Worker as “Exempt?” Three Basic Tests

According to the DOL, for an employer to claim an exemption for a particular worker, three tests need to be satisfied:

- **PAYMENT ON A SALARY BASIS:** The employee must be paid a predetermined and fixed salary that is not subject to reduction because of variations in the quality or quantity of work performed; and
- **PAYMENT OF A MINIMUM SALARY LEVEL:** The amount of salary paid must meet a specified minimum amount; and
- **A DUTIES TEST:** The worker’s job

duties must primarily involve those associated with exempt classification: executive, administrative, professional, outside sales, or computer employees.

Salary Basis

Salary basis simply means the employer must pay the worker on a salaried basis – that is, an employee regularly receives a predetermined amount of money constituting all or part of the employee’s compensation for each pay period (typically on a weekly, or less frequent, basis). The predetermined salary amount cannot be reduced because of variations in the quality or quantity of the employee’s work. An exempt employee must receive the salary for any week in which the employee performs any work, regardless of the number of days or hours worked. Exempt employees do not need to be paid for any workweek in which they perform no work.

The salary basis test does NOT apply to outside sales employees, teachers, and employees practicing law or medicine.

Being Paid on a “Fee Basis”

Administrative, professional, and computer employees may be paid on a “fee basis” rather than on a salary basis. If the worker is paid an agreed sum for a single job, regardless of the time required for its completion, the worker is being paid on a “fee basis.” A fee payment is generally paid for a unique job, rather than for a series of jobs repeated some number of times and for which identical payments are repeatedly made.

Fees must still meet the minimum salary level requirement. To determine whether the fee payment meets this minimum salary requirement, the test is to consider the time worked on the job and determine whether the payment is at a rate that would amount to at least the full standard salary level if the employee worked 40 hours.

For example, under the \$1,128 per week standard salary level that takes effect on January 1, 2025, a diving instructor paid \$600 for a course/class that took 20 hours to complete meets the minimum salary requirement since the rate would result in \$1,200 if 40 hours were worked.

Salary Level

As indicated in the new rules, to be considered “exempt,” the worker must be paid at least the minimum standard salary (\$844 per week starting July 1, 2024, and \$1,128 starting January 1, 2025). These levels will be revisited in 2027.

As with the salary basis test, the salary level test does NOT apply to outside sales employees, teachers, and employees practicing law or medicine. **The salary level test also does not apply to business owners who own at least a bona fide 20-percent equity interest in their enterprise and are actively engaged in its management.**

Duties Test

Under the standard duties test, a worker’s primary duty must be that of an exempt executive, administrative, or professional employee. “Primary duty” means the principal, main, major, or most important duty that the employee performs. Determination of an employee’s primary duty must be based on all the facts in a particular case, with the major emphasis on the character of the employee’s whole job.

As previously described, to be considered exempt from overtime under the new Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) rules, the “Executive, Administrative & Professional” (EAP) workers meet [standard duties tests](#) for at least one of these categories. The duties tests have not been changed from those implemented in 2016 and 2019.

The Department of Labor’s [Small Entity Compliance Guide to the Fair Labor Standards](#)

[Act’s Exemptions can be found here.](#)

According to the Society for Human Resources Management, in light of the near-certainty that the final rule will be challenged in court, and in light of the successful challenge to these same rules made by various organizations (including DEMA) in 2016, employers should start preparing their plans now for how to comply. Employers are advised to proceed with caution in terms of actual rollout or implementation, and they should prepare for uncertainty.

For more information visit the Department of Labor website at <https://www.dol.gov/ot>. Questions on compliance and enforcement should be directed to your employment attorney or the nearest Wage and Hour Department (WHD) district office. Locate the nearest office by calling the WHD’s toll-free help line at (866) 4US-WAGE ((866) 487-9243) during business hours or log onto [WHD’s website for a nationwide listing of WHD district and area offices](#).

DEMA Board Supports the U.S. FISHERS Act

*[Impact on Recreational Diving:](#)
If this bill passes, many diving businesses and associated small businesses (restaurants, hotels, etc) affected by a fishery disaster could see relief in a timely manner to help their business operations.*

In April, DEMA was asked by Congressman Byron Donalds (FL-19) to support [the federal FISHERS Act](#) which would [expedite the disbursement of federal fisheries emergency funds](#) in the occurrence of a disaster or other event that impacts a fishery. Currently there is no required deadline for the Office of Budget Management (OMB) to disburse the funds to a state applying for fisheries disaster relief. This bill would change that.

States currently apply for federal fishery disaster relief for a variety of reasons including

day-to-day extreme weather, water quality issues, damage from hurricanes, and others. Some of these specific fishery impacts can affect recreational diving, including:

- Boats and docks that are damaged or destroyed.
- Hotel and restaurant infrastructure damage that dissuades clients from diving in an affected area.
- Water quality issues impacting fish health due to high levels of salinity, harmful algal blooms in the water and other water quality problems. Some of these are well known to the diving industry, such as red tide impacts on goliath grouper.

This bill would help to modernize and streamline the federal fishery disaster relief funding process, helping to reduce the time needed to assist many diving businesses and associated small businesses (restaurants, hotels, etc) which could otherwise go out of business before the relief is made available.

After review, DEMA's PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED SUPPORTING THIS BILL and passed along their recommendation to the DEMA Board of Directors. On April 18, 2024, the DEMA Board signed and submitted a letter to Representative Donalds with thanks for assisting the recreational diving industry. The DEMA Board letter is [available here](#).

Reese's Law and the Diving Industry – Affecting Devices Using Button and Coin Batteries

Impact on Recreational Diving:

Some diving products, including dive computers use smaller user-replaceable button-sized or coin-sized batteries. This rule will directly impact the design and manufacture of any product using such batteries, including those imported from outside the U.S. Retailers stocking these products may also be impacted.

In 2022, in response to the death of an 18-month-old child who ingested a button battery and died, a new U.S. law was enacted requiring the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to create safety standards for so-called “button batteries” to ensure they are safe for children in their packaging and when they are in household devices such as remote controls and key fobs. The law is named after the 18-month-old Reese Hamsmith.

In September 2023 the U.S. CPSC voted to adopt the previously voluntary standard, making it mandatory. The now-mandatory standard is ANSI/UL 4200A-2023 Standard for Safety for Products Incorporating Button Batteries or Coin Cell Batteries. The Commission also established labeling requirements for button cell or coin battery packaging, to warn of the ingestion hazard to children.

Per ANSI/UL 4200A-2023, the requirements for consumer products containing or designed to use button cell or coin batteries are as follows:

- Battery compartments containing replaceable button cell or coin batteries must be secured such that they require the use of a tool or at least two independent and simultaneous hand movements to open.
- Button cell or coin battery compartments must not allow such batteries to be accessed or liberated as a result of use and abuse testing.
- The packaging for the overall product must bear a warning.
- The product itself must bear a warning, if practicable.
- Accompanying instructions and manuals must include all of the applicable warnings.

Additionally, the law requires that any button cell or coin battery offered for sale, manufactured for sale, imported into the U.S., or included separately with a consumer

product, meet the child-resistant packaging requirements in the [Poison Prevention Packaging Standards](#) after February 12, 2023.

The CPSC has published a direct final rule ([88 FR 65274](#)) that incorporates by reference ANSI/UL 4200A-2023 as the mandatory safety standard. The requirements are codified at [16 CFR part 1263](#) and apply to consumer products that contain button cell or coin batteries manufactured or imported on or after October 23, 2023. Third party testing and certification of children's products subject to 16 CFR part 1263 is not required until on or after December 20, 2023.

A "button cell or coin battery" that is subject to the requirements of 16 CFR part 1263 means a single cell battery with a diameter greater than the height of the battery. The rule excludes zinc-air button cell or coin batteries from the scope of 16 CFR part 1263.

The Commission recognizes that there may be limited testing availability and potential hardship with meeting the mandatory requirements; therefore, the Commission has granted an enforcement discretion such that these requirements will apply to products manufactured or imported after March 19, 2024.

[ANSI/UL 4200A-2023 FOUND HERE](#)

(Please Note: You will need to register/log in to view the standard)

Help Fight Rising U.S. Insurance Rates by Joining the DIVE BOAT Act Social Media Campaign

[*Impact on Recreational Diving:*](#)

If this bill passes, the current cost of vessel liability insurance could be reduced. Actions taken last year by Congress have already resulted in unnecessary and unfair increases in insurance rates for dive vessels.

DIVE BOAT Act Update

Even with the ongoing dysfunction in Washington, DEMA continues its efforts to push the DIVE BOAT Act forward. Our team developed policy language with the support of outside actuaries to provide dive boat and shop operators with much needed commercial insurance relief.

Since the beginning of 2024 DEMA's team has been meeting with Members of Congress to help them understand the real-world costs that operators and consumers face as a result of the Small Passenger Vessel Act, which was included in the 2023 National Defense Authorization. Our initial efforts focused on including the DIVE BOAT Act in the 2024 U.S. Coast Guard Reauthorization. However, the Senate has yet to draft its proposed legislation. Given this lapse by Congress, DEMA is exploring other legislative "vehicles" that must be passed.

You may have seen from the news that this has been the least productive Congress in post-WW2 history, with fewer than 40 bills passed during the last 14 months. For comparison, the prior record for the most "do nothing Congress" was in 2013-2014, with 72 bills. However, DEMA is forging ahead and has instead only redoubled our efforts to educate Members and Senators about the challenges our community faces.

We continue to need your help to spread the word to policymakers and consumers across the country. Now is a great time to leverage DEMA's social media campaign materials to educate the community about the reason for increased costs and ask for their support of the DIVE BOAT Act with divers planning for Spring and Summer Vacations.

[**ACCESS DEMA's CAMPAIGN MATERIALS AND SHARE**](#)

If you haven't yet contacted your U.S. House Representative or two U.S. Senators, please

do so [here](#). We also invite you to share with us directly your experience of increased costs. This is essential – please share with legislators the harmful effects of this new law.

Help Support for the Education and Workforce Freedom Act

Impact on Recreational Diving:

If this bill passes, training organizations and dive centers could see more candidates for diving instructor training, and more people choosing diving instruction as a career.

On July 9, the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee approved [H.R. 8915](#), the Education and Workforce Freedom Act, by a vote of 23-13. H.R. 8915 has now been reported to the House floor, for consideration at a time yet to be determined.

Section 3 of H.R. 8915 encompasses a revised version the *Freedom to Invest in Tomorrow's Workforce Act* which would permit beneficiaries of 529 savings accounts to use the funds in those accounts to cover costs associated with obtaining and maintaining postsecondary credentials, including professional certifications and occupational licenses.

This bill will expand eligible uses of [tax-favorable 529 savings plans](#) to cover costs associated with workforce training and credentialing programs, such as professional certifications. **Professional-level certifications, such as recreational diving instructor certifications, qualify for the benefits listed under these bills.**

529 Savings plans can currently be used for college savings as well as savings for K-12 education. There are two types of 529 plans: [prepaid tuition plans](#) and [education savings plans](#). All fifty states and the District of Columbia sponsor at least one type of 529 plan. **Currently, training, certifications and other credentials are ineligible under 529 plans.**

There are two primary differences between [H.R. 1477](#) (the original House bill) and Section 3 of H.R. 8915. First, H.R. 8915 has language that expressly covers programs connected with obtaining a postsecondary credential, including those required to obtain a state or federal license. This change would effectively cover training programs for pilots and airplane mechanics required to obtain Federal Aviation Administration certification for those professions—which opens up a whole new group of supporters for this bill who had previously sponsored different legislation ([H.R. 1818](#)) that would have expanded 529s specifically for the purpose of covering these aviation training programs.

Secondly, H.R. 8915 includes more examples of qualified recognized post-secondary credentials and credential programs, such as accreditation by the National Commission of Certifying Agencies, the American National Standards Institute or the Institute for Credentialing Excellence; inclusion in the Department of Defense's "Credentialing Opportunities Online" database; inclusion in the database of training programs maintained by the Department of Veterans Affairs; or meeting other criteria established by the IRS in consultation with the Department of Labor (a catch-all category that should capture reputable certification programs that don't fall in the categories listed in the above examples). As such, we believe the postsecondary credential provisions in H.R. 8915 represent an improvement to the introduced version of the Freedom to Invest to Invest in Tomorrow's Workforce Act and we are excited to see them advance.

Education and Workforce Freedom Act Would Provide Economic Flexibility and Opportunity

Of course, with Congress, nothing is ever straightforward. H.R. 8915 also contains provisions in other sections of the bill that would expand 529 savings plans to cover

costs related to private school education and homeschooling, without a cap. These provisions are generally opposed by Democrats, which led to a party-line vote, even though one Democratic Ways and Means member (Rep. John Larson from Connecticut) has cosponsored the bill and another committee Democrat, Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-Calif.), spoke out in favor of expanding 529 plans to cover certifications / postsecondary credentials and explicitly praised the Freedom to Invest in Tomorrow's Workforce Act during the hearing.

H.R. 8915 would provide valuable tax-advantaged resources for workers who pursue career growth, mid-career changes or alternative career pathways, and would help those interested in a professional career in recreational diving. Expanding eligible uses for 529 plans would empower workers of any educational background, skill level or age and would benefit all industries and professions that rely on employees with specialized training or recognized credentials.

American workers and families could use their 529 plans to help cover:

- Certification program tuition.
- Testing fees, including practice exams.
- Required books and equipment.
- Continuing education and certification renewal; and
- Other charges required to obtain and maintain a certification.

How Can You Help?

With this change and improvement, we suggest again reaching out to your U.S. Senators and Representative and ask them to support the Education and Workforce Freedom Act, H.R. 8915. You can find your lawmakers at these links:

- [Find your U.S. Senators Here](#)
- [Find your U.S. Representative Here](#)

SUMMARY

2024 has been an active year for DEMA's Public Policy Committee and Staff. Public Policy has long-term impacts on international, regional, and local dive business. DEMA and the Public Policy Committee recommend that all diving businesses become involved with these important issues.

Be sure to [subscribe to DEMA's Public Policy Digest](#). Issued monthly at no cost to subscribers. ■



GO DIVE NOW CONSUMER MARKETING CAMPAIGN

One of DEMA's core objectives is to engage in marketing programs that promote recreational scuba diving of all kinds, create new customers, drive consumers into retail stores and resorts, and encourage customer retention. DEMA launched the *Go Dive Now* consumer campaign to advance these goals in 2016. Throughout 2024, DEMA has focused on providing Members with regular access to consumer marketing tools and support that can empower them to grow their customer base and keep their current customers engaged.

GO DIVE NOW WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

DEMA has remained committed to consumer outreach by maintaining access to the GoDiveNow.com website, which features active listings of DEMA Member stores and dive destinations.

Leads from GoDiveNow.com to DEMA Member Stores

Since January 2019, the GoDiveNow.com website has incorporated lead generation functionality. The website's [Dive](#)



[Store Finder](#) and [Dive Vacation Finder](#) features help consumers locate a DEMA Member store or travel provider in the area of their interest. Results from a consumer's search provide them with a list of qualifying businesses. By clicking on a listed DEMA Member store or travel provider link, a pop-up allows the consumer to provide their contact information so the DEMA Member business can follow up with them about their goods, services, and/or destination.

Members are able to customize their listing with specific details about their operation, such as the services they offer, contact information, and business logo.

Go Dive Now Social Media Engagement

The *Go Dive Now* social media accounts remain an engaging way to inspire both potential and active divers. By showcasing the excitement and adventure of diving, the *Go Dive Now* social media channels aim to spark curiosity among non-divers and provide seasoned divers with continuous motivation to dive more often. From stunning underwater photography to educational content, these posts highlight the thrill and accessibility of diving.

DEMA also leverages *Go Dive Now's* social media channels to support its members by directing followers to [GoDiveNow.com](#), where they can locate DEMA Member stores and dive destinations through the [Dive Store Finder](#) and [Dive Vacation Finder](#) features. *Go Dive Now's* social media presence helps drive traffic to member businesses and dive resorts.

In addition, the *Go Dive Now* accounts provide timely, valuable information on diving safety and the benefits of diving, helping to build a community of informed, passionate divers. With content that appeals to a wide range of interests—whether it's travel, adventure, finding serenity, or simply a love for the ocean—*Go Dive Now's* social media presence continues to fuel the diving lifestyle and promote the growth of the diving community.

MEMBER RESOURCES

DEMA is dedicated to equipping member retail stores and dive destinations with effective marketing resources to help them connect with potential divers and engage with their current customers.

Go Dive Now Marketing Digest

Throughout 2024, DEMA's monthly marketing e-newsletter, the *Go Dive Now Marketing Digest*, has continued to provide its subscribers—both members and non-members—free, ready-to-use social media graphics and content to reach affluent, active potential divers. The newsletter

aims to provide content that helps keep current customers engaged while attracting new ones.

In addition to the curated social media content, the *Go Dive Now Marketing Digest* also includes engaging video lessons led by DEMA's Communications & Publications Chief, Rachelle Reimers. These lessons offer expert insights and actionable strategies to enhance marketing efforts, making them both simple and effective.

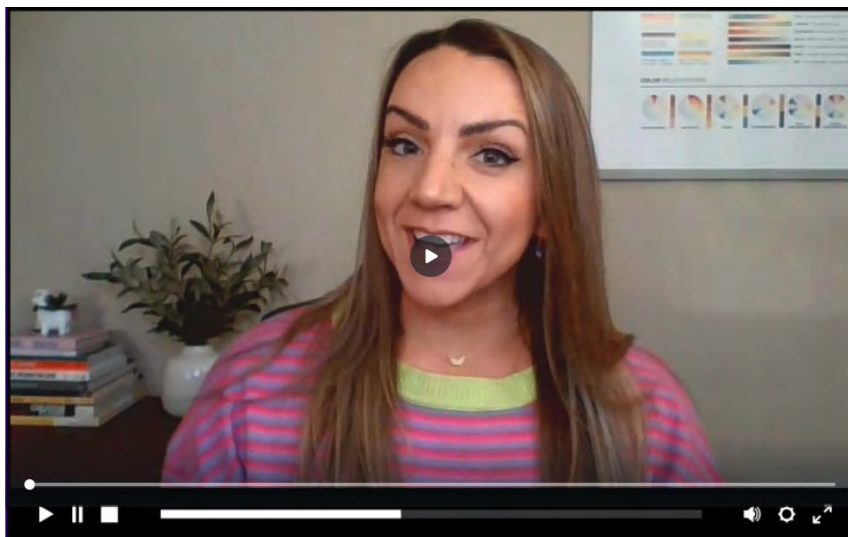
In 2024, [video marketing lesson topics](#) included:

- Tips for elevating the effectiveness of your website



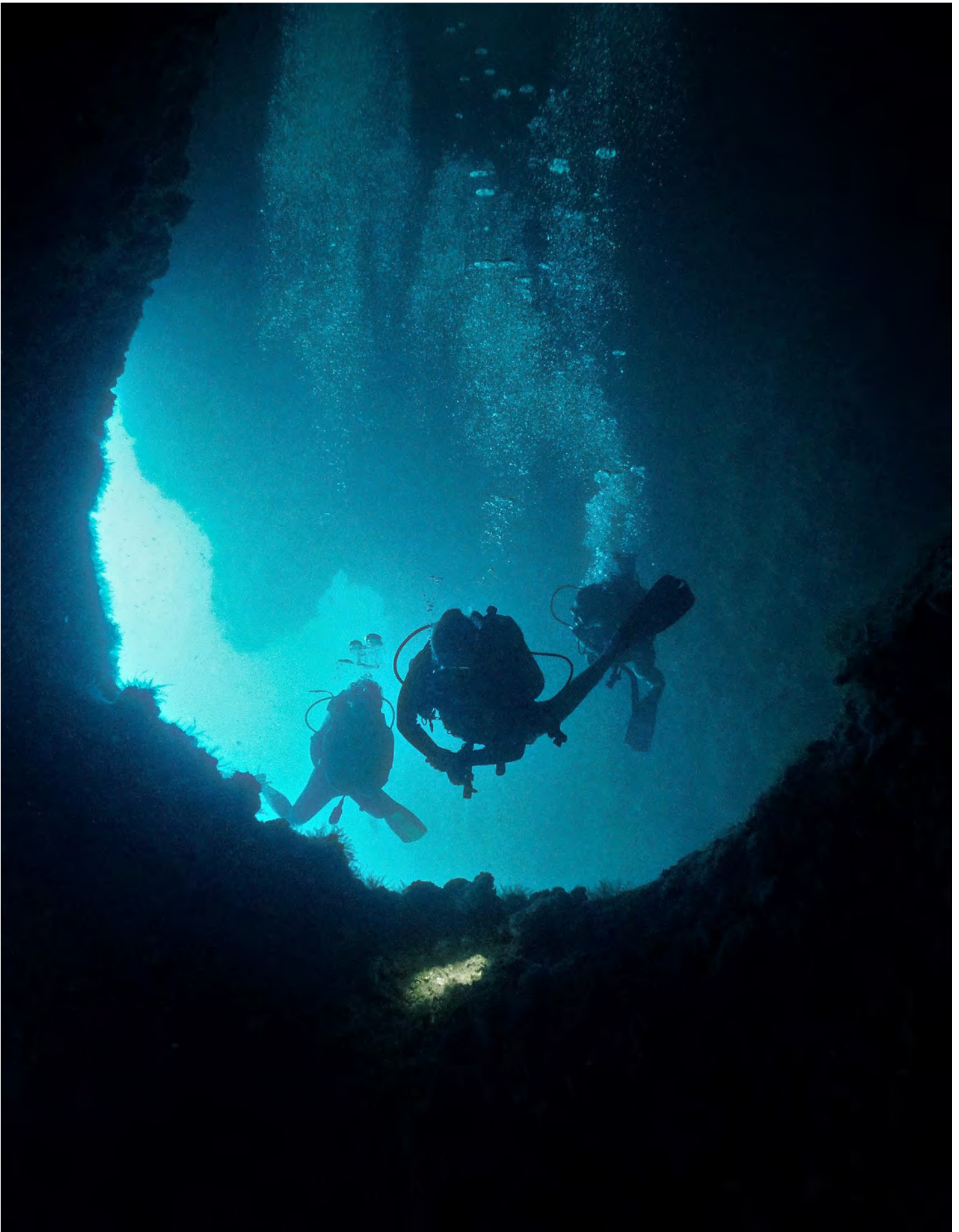
- A tutorial for how to implement Instagram's new Polls feature
- Insight into how you can use the Meta Ads Library to “spy” on your competition
- A look at the “Marketing Rule of 7”
- Ways to overcome imposter syndrome
- A lesson on how to create an eye-catching graphic with Canva
- An analysis of the pros and cons of stock vs. custom photography for your business
- A demonstration of how you can use Adobe Color to leverage color in your marketing efforts
- A tutorial for how to turn your logo into a GIF
- And more!

Diving professionals are encouraged to [subscribe to the Go Dive Now Marketing Digest](#). An archive of the suggested social media content and images is available online.



DEMA Members Can Use *Go Dive Now* Materials for Free

DEMA continues to provide Members with complimentary access to advertising materials. From video commercial templates to email graphics, these resources have been designed by a professional advertising agency exclusively for DEMA Members' utilization. Using these complimentary materials, Members can produce their own cost-effective advertising campaigns. To access these FREE materials, Members should log into their Go Dive Now Member Toolkit on DEMA.org. ■





RETAILER ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MERIAL CURRER, CHAIR

The role of the Retailer Engagement Committee is to explore ways that DEMA can assist the dive retail sector and engage retailers in the process. The 2024 Retail Engagement Committee consists of individuals working from different regions who work with or own dive retail companies. These operations also vary in size and use many different dive-related vendors (e.g., manufacturers and training organizations). Each member of this committee brings their own experiences and expertise to retail issues under discussion.

As the primary audience for DEMA Show includes retailers, retail staff and instructional staff, this Committee also contributes to the development and production of DEMA Show, especially the in-person professional development components of the event.

The 2024 Retailer Resource Committee includes: Jennetta Adams, International Scuba; Robin Bostater, Kaizen Scuba; Jeff Cinciripino,

Scuba Shack Diving Services; Merial Currer (Chair), Patriots For Disabled Divers; Patrick Hammer, Dive Right In Scuba; Bob Hathaway, Odyssey Scuba & Travel, LLC; Brooke Speedy, Leaird's Underwater Service; and Rich Thomas, International Scuba.

During 2024 the Retailer Engagement Committee was responsible for the following:

- Recommending Professional Development topics for DEMA Show 2024.
- Contributing to and review of DEMA's Blueprint for Growth Advertising survey and data and making recommendations for future research.
- Reviewing a retail survey to develop an understanding of what motivates divers to get into the dive retail business.
- Proposing the direction for future Retail Engagement activities.

RECOMMENDING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOPICS FOR DEMA SHOW 2024

The Retailer Engagement Committee reviews and makes recommendations for all DEMA's proposed retail professional development programs. The process consists of reviewing submitted speaker/topic proposals, which include education outcomes and objectives, relevance to the current market, and speaker quality.

In 2023, the Committee authorized a Retail Operations Survey which included a survey question regarding professional development:

If it were easily available and cost-effective for YOU or YOUR EMPLOYEES, what type of dive store staff training would be helpful for your business? Rate the following on a scale of 1=not important, 5 =very important).

The results were as follows:

TRAINING OPTIONS	AVERAGE
Product training on the equipment brands I sell	4.25
Closing Strategies, helping customers buy what is in inventory	3.97
Networking during Dive Activities – Building customer relationships	3.90
Social media marketing	3.81
Handling Objections	3.74
Sales Prospecting – finding new customers	3.70
Keeping doors open during tough economic times	3.66
Attracting a Younger Audience to the Store	3.53
Inventory Management	3.51
Retail Floor Planning/Maximizing Sales from my Retail Space	3.43
Search Engine Marketing	3.36
Merchandise and Window Display	3.31
Guerilla Marketing – unconventional ways to find customers	3.28
Using Marketing Analytics	3.25
Database Marketing	3.17
Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) for marketing and advertising	3.16
Inventory Purchasing	3.16
Merchandise Forecasting/Open to Buy	3.12
Providing financing for customer purchases	2.83
Human Resource Management	2.82

These suggested topics are consistent with DEMA's past and current offerings for online and in-person professional development. The DEMA Retail Engagement Committee continues to evaluate these offerings to provide the best educational opportunities available to the industry. Combined with [DEMA's Retail Task](#)

[Assessment](#) developed by this Committee, this data informs the Committee when selecting professional topics for DEMA Show.

The full complement of online and in-person DEMA Show DEMA-sponsored [Professional Development sessions can be found here](#).

BLUEPRINT FOR GROWTH: RETAIL ADVERTISING SURVEY

In combination with DEMA's Research Committee, the Retail Engagement Committee reviewed and provided input on DEMA's latest research endeavor entitled "Blueprint for Growth: Retail Advertising Survey."

The goal of this survey was to obtain benchmarking information for all retailers and to answer other operational questions. This survey is a follow on to DEMA's 2023 Blueprint for Growth: Retail Operations Survey. The results of the questionnaire include information about almost all aspects of retail dive store advertising. To obtain the information, DEMA reached out to past attendees of DEMA Show (2019, 2021, 2022 and 2023) and DEMA-Member companies.

WHAT MOTIVATES DIVERS TO GET INTO THE DIVE RETAIL BUSINESS?

This is a new survey aimed at retailers from all over the world. The goal of this instrument

is to help DEMA understand more about why someone involved as a recreational diver decides to become a dive retailer. The broad assumption is that most who get into the diving industry do so because of the promise of an enjoyable lifestyle while making a living, although this assumption has never been studied.

The outcome of this study will assist DEMA in soliciting and selecting professional development and should help DEMA construct professional development that is relevant to the actual reasons retailers got into dive retail in the first place. This study is underway at this writing and results will be published early in the new year.

PREPARING FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS FOR DEMA SHOW 2025: CALL FOR EDUCATION PROPOSALS

The Retail Engagement Committee works well in advance of presenting professional development sessions to the industry. The call





for professional development speakers includes a call for dive industry professionals as well as general topic speakers for the DEMA audience.

The solicitation for general retail, marketing, operations and sales topics for DEMA-sponsored education produces strong programs and brings a wealth of relevant information from outside the diving industry to the DEMA attendee audience. While valuable, and capable of providing a different small business perspective, the Committee has also determined that there is a need for bringing in actual dive retailers to

provide real-world diving retail information to the DEMA community. As a result, starting in 2022, this committee issued a call for peer-to-peer speakers to address dive-specific retail topics for the in-person DEMA Show.

If you are an accomplished dive retailer and would like to give back to the diving community through professional development sessions during DEMA Show 2025, be on the lookout early in 2025 for the call for DEMA Show speakers! ■



RESEARCH COMMITTEE

WILLIAM CLINE, CHAIR

DEMA's research role includes providing Members with pertinent industry data that helps their businesses. Providing market and Industry research is critical for all trade associations, and DEMA views this responsibility as a central part of the association's activities.

The 2024 Research Committee consists of DEMA Members that have interest, experience, and an understanding that a variety of market research is needed for diving businesses to be successful. Research critical for the diving industry includes DEMA Show-related topics, market related issues, diving customer matters and retail-related inquiries. The 2024 Research Committee includes:

William Cline (Chair), Cline Group Advertising, Inc.; Ben Collins, Garmin; JoAnn Haack, Divers Alert Network; Shelli Hendricks, Blue Horizons Solutions; Jason Leggatt, Shearwater Research Inc.; Lily Mak, Enchanted Sea Images; Charles Maricle,

XK Sports; Jeff Mondle, PADI; David Prichard, Enchanted Sea Images, Inc.; Lee Rand, Avelo.

THE NEED FOR RESEARCH

At the heart of "marketing" is the need to understand the dive customer, how to communicate with them, and knowing which message will generate the greatest response in a cost-effective manner. DEMA's Research Committee guides several ongoing research projects annually for DEMA Member use. All members of the diving community can benefit from DEMA's large-scale research information.

Most everyone in the diving industry has an idea of their own customers; retailers see who walks into the store and purchases the equipment and training they sell; manufacturers have a good understanding of who purchases their products through warranty registrations and information from their retail dealers; training organizations

can easily check their own certification information for demographic details, places where their customers live, and more. The question for the industry and for DEMA is how to pull all this information together to help enable industry growth. Having marketing data from all sources in the diving industry, including data from actual divers is critical, but only if it translates into marketing action that helps members. That's where the Research Committee excels.

During 2024 the Research Committee Workplan included:

- Reviewing the DEMA Certification Census
- Developing and deploying a Retail Advertising Survey
- Conducting Dive Consumer Research Using PRIZM
- Deployment of the Manufacturing Purchase Index (MPI) Research Report

REVIEWING THE DEMA CERTIFICATION CENSUS

Thanks to the three participating certification organizations, data on the number of new diver certifications in the U.S. and Caribbean has been readily available to the Industry each year since 2003. The Certification Census includes data exclusively on U.S.-based Open Water-level diver certifications (as defined by the Recreational Scuba Training Council [RSTC]). This statistic is a measure of growth for the Industry and is indicative of the health of the sport in the U.S.

All DEMA-Member training organizations are invited to participate, although not all did in 2024. The three participating certification organizations for 2024 are NAUI, SDI/TDI and PADI. Taken together, these organizations represent most of the Open Water-level certifications issued in the U.S. and U.S. territory market.

The cooperative effort between all participating certification organizations includes providing their

certification information to an independent, third-party auditing firm. Open Water certification numbers are reported by the third-party administrator (TPA) to the Industry in aggregate total, only after the TPA does a thorough review of the data, removes any duplicated customer records that appear across or from within agencies, and receives written verification of the final numbers from each reporting training organization. The process is designed to make the Certification Census totally anonymous regarding the new diver's training organization affiliation and to produce an accurate accounting of the total Open Water divers from within the U.S. and Caribbean. Neither the DEMA Office nor members of the DEMA Board have access to individual training organization totals, only the aggregate total.



In 2024, DEMA made the [Certification Census available by subscription](#), ensuring that data was accessible to interested parties as soon as it becomes available. Subscriptions for basic numerical data are available to all industry members at no cost. DEMA Member subscribers have access to basic data and state-by-state data at no cost. All Certification Census data is also available to non-members at a non-member rate. Those subscribing at the beginning of the calendar year also have access to data looking back up to five previous years for comparative purposes.

DEVELOPING AND DEPLOYING A RETAIL ADVERTISING SURVEY

In 2024, the DEMA Research Committee conducted a retail advertising survey, the first since 2016. More than 280 retail dive centers responded to this worldwide survey, with 81% coming from the U.S., and the remainder from countries across the globe. The survey requested information about advertising activities from these retail stores, with the goal of obtaining benchmarking information for all retailers and answering other operational questions to help assess how stores of different sizes handle their own advertising. This survey is a follow on to DEMA's 2023 Blueprint for Growth Retail Operations Survey.

Goals of DEMA's Retail Advertising Research

There were several considerations when planning this advertising research:

- **Benchmarking:** DEMA sought to provide information that can be utilized to guide members when making business decisions about their own advertising efforts.
- **Economic/Operational Data:** While not strictly an "operational" survey, the data gathered in this effort made it possible to cross-reference advertising efforts by size and operation details of the retail store.
- **Specific Data Points:** Advertising research is also critical to determining specific courses of action for retailers as well as DEMA.
- **Go Dive Now:** DEMA is currently contemplating the reinstitution of GoDiveNow. Understanding if, how, and when retailers advertise is critical to this effort.

Methodology

DEMA engaged directly with retailers on this survey. The data was collected using the Survey

Monkey online survey tool. DEMA used the list of retail attendees from the last four DEMA Shows (2019, 2021, 2022 and 2023) as the basis for reaching current retailers. These are retailers who are already engaged with DEMA. Data was then analyzed by this committee.

The [Blueprint for Growth Advertising Survey](#) was published in early 2024 and is available through the DEMA Store. This information is incredibly helpful in understanding what retail stores are doing to reach out to potential and current customers.



CONDUCTING DIVE CONSUMER RESEARCH USING PRIZM

In 2024, DEMA began researching current dive consumers to understand better their general purchasing habits, where they are located, and how to reach more of them. To accomplish this, DEMA worked with manufacturers, training organizations and dive travel providers and segmented the customers by diving activity:

- Divers certified at the Open Water level in 2021, 2022 and 2023.
- Divers certified ABOVE the Open Water level in 2021, 2022 and 2023
- Divers purchasing hard goods (defined for this study as buying a regulator, BC or dive computer)
- Customers traveling to dive.

Analysis Area Code	Analysis Area Name	County Code	County	Wealthy Families [02, 04, 05, 06, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16]					
				Base Count	Base % Comp	Count	% Comp	% Pers	Index
47396	Yorktown	18035	Delaware County	2,972	7.80%	403	30.39%	13.56%	400
	Index (320~400)			2,972	7.80%	403	30.39%	13.56%	400
47304	Muncie	18035	Delaware County	13,144	33.83%	870	65.81%	6.62%	195
	Index (160~240)			13,144	33.83%	870	65.81%	6.62%	195
47305	Muncie	18035	Delaware County	1,694	4.33%	7	0.53%	0.41%	12
47303	Muncie	18035	Delaware County	10,071	25.76%	33	2.49%	0.33%	10
47302	Muncie	18035	Delaware County	11,130	28.47%	13	0.98%	0.12%	3
47306	Muncie	18035	Delaware County	77	0.20%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0
	Index (0~80)			22,972	58.77%	53	4.00%	0.23%	7
	Total			39,088	100.00%	1,328	100.00%	3.39%	100

The customers from each of these activities were analyzed separately, and the data was also aggregated to understand the customer participating in all of these activities. Although the customers were diving consumers during the study period, the data gathered was more far-reaching, and included an analysis of the consumers' life stages, customer buying behaviors such as household purchases and home-buying, and more.

DEMA is using a marketing information system called PRIZM by Claritas, with a long-verified approach that recognizes customers with similar incomes, activities and backgrounds gravitate toward one another, tend to shop in the same stores, often buy many of the same products and have other similar life stage behaviors; the concept that "birds of a feather flock together."

WHO is the Customer?

PRIZM provides an abundance of information about dive customers participating in these activities. Among the information available:

- Household Income
- Marital Status
- Highest Education
- Market Value of Home
- Length of Time in Residence
- Single Family Dwelling vs Multiple Family Dwelling
- Homeowner vs Renter

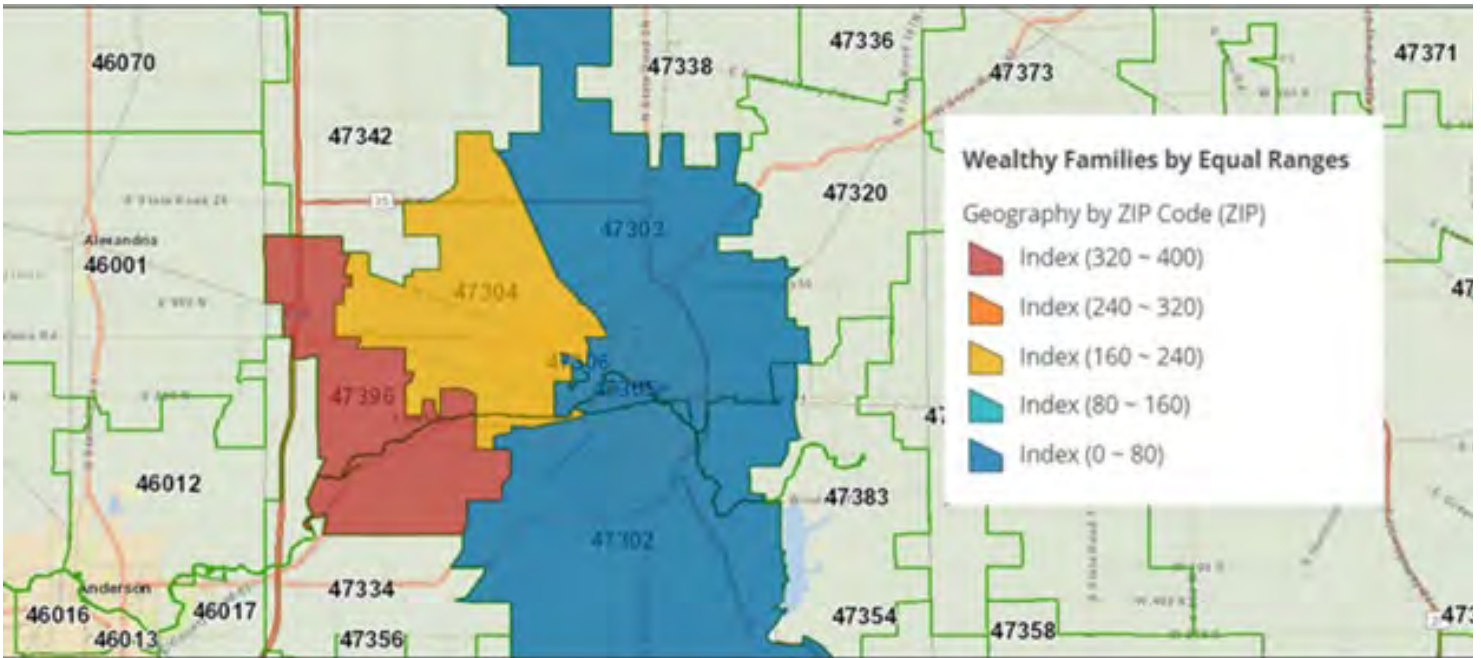
- Neighborhood Households per Square Mile
- Estimated Household Net Worth
- Presence & Age of Children
- Number in the Household
- Ethnicity
- Household Internet & Mail Use
- Age of the Head of Household
- And more...

Psychographics

Part of the PRIZM analysis includes understanding "Psychographic segmentation," a research methodology used for studying consumers and dividing them into groups using psychological characteristics such as personality, lifestyle, social status, activities, interests, opinions, and attitudes. Using this concept allows companies to identify, in detail, their best customers, learn how to win more customers like them and keep them coming back.

How is This Data Useful?

Analyzing a set of current customer records creates precise profiles of these customers and literally maps out the specific neighborhoods where more customers like them can be located. PRIZM identifies 68 different household types enabling the diving industry to target them. Combined with segmenting consumers by activities in which they participate helps transform raw consumer and demographic data into actionable data in a quick and accurate way.



The DEMA Research Committee is compiling the data from this most recent study and will publish the information in the early part of 2025.

CONTINUATION OF THE MANUFACTURING PURCHASE INDEX (MPI) RESEARCH REPORT

In 2023 DEMA initiated a new business indicator for the manufacturing sector. The methodology for the Manufacturing Purchase Index (MPI) is identical to that used by the Institute for Supply Management (ISM) which is commonly cited and utilized within the U.S. general manufacturing sector and investment community. The MPI does not require reporting specific sales numbers but provides a leading trend indicator to understand more fully the state of orders and inventories from diving’s manufacturing sector.

Background

In the United States the Institute for Supply Management (ISM) began using a “Purchasing Manager’s Index” (PMI) in 1948 to assist in understanding data for the manufacturing sector. The PMI is used extensively today by the U.S. venture capital and business communities seeking to invest in U.S. manufacturing companies. The

published data from ISM is about PAST orders and other activities but is also used as a means of predicting broader economic issues. Even though the data is for past orders, inventories and other figures, the PMI acts as a **leading indicator** of manufacturing output that predicts economic recession or expansion of industries.

The PMI is a simple measurement tool; companies can report whether specific aspects of the manufacturing business are increasing, decreasing, or have remained unchanged during a given period. In effect this is a “trend analysis.”

While PMI gathers data from a long list of categories within the traditional manufacturing sector. **DEMA recommended that Dive Manufacturers report an abbreviated dataset**, limiting the requested dive manufacturing data to quarterly reporting in the following areas:

- New Orders: reflects the levels of new orders from customers.
- Inventories: reflects the increases and/or decreases in inventory levels.

Why is this Important to the Diving Industry?

This manufacturing data can assist with critical decision making for ALL parts of the diving industry and can be used in conjunction with data on certifications as well as on other customer data. It is PAST data but can help with trends. For example:

Hard goods manufacturers and suppliers:

- A regulator manufacturer makes production decisions based on the new future orders it expects from retailers. Those new regulator orders drive management's purchasing decisions about dozens of component parts such as high-or low-pressure seats/poppets, hoses, and orings. Existing inventory balances also drive the amount of production the manufacturer needs to complete new orders and to keep some inventory on hand at the end of the month.
- Parts Suppliers may also make decisions based on this important data. A parts supplier for a regulator manufacturer follows the data to estimate the amount of future demand for its products, including raw materials such as plastic or rubber. Parts suppliers may also be interested in seeing an index on inventory, which affects the amount of production its manufacturing clients must generate.
- MPI information about supply and demand affects planning for manufacturing budgets, managing staffing levels, and forecasting cash flow.

Other members of the diving industry can also benefit from this important data:

- Retailers can use this data as it reflects product availability (especially soft goods) for new customers learning to dive.

- The data can be used by certification organizations as an indicator of trends in purchasing. Divers that obtain continuing diver education also tend to purchase more equipment.
- Divers with additional education also tend to travel to dive, which can assist with both liveaboard and land-based dive resort forecasting.
- This data is also important for current retailers seeking to expand and informs and encourages new business growth for all retailers: brick and mortar and online.
- **All members of the diving industry benefit because DEMA has data that can be utilized to help legislatures better understand the diving industry. The diving community CANNOT easily discuss or change detrimental laws without being able to discuss the current status of manufacturing and other research-based statistics.**

In 2024, for the second year, DEMA has gathered data quarterly using two data points for equipment as defined below:

- As compared to the previous quarter.
- As compared to the same quarter in the previous year



For example, when reporting whether orders are up, the same or down, the comparison for Q1 2024 can be made with Q1 and Q4 of 2023. In this way the data will reflect the changes per quarter DURING the year, as well as changes from the same time in the previous year. Combined, these figures help the user understand the seasonality of the dive manufacturing business and how it impacts the reporting companies.

All data is reported to a third-party administrator (TPA) under contract with DEMA to maintain anonymity of the data with respect to each reporting company. Only aggregated data is

reported to the industry. Neither DEMA nor any individual company sees any individual company’s data. Once committed, DEMA will ask that the company continue to report the selected categories for each quarter for the calendar year and provide rewards for participation as described below.

With current labor shortages and shipping issues continuing in this and other sectors, reducing reporting categories to essentials that help predict the health of the manufacturing sector may prove a more successful data collection strategy than requesting detailed numbers monthly.

Definitions of Equipment Reported:

CATEGORY	EQUIPMENT TYPE	DEFINITIONS
Soft Goods	Masks	All styles of scuba masks. Excludes swim masks and goggles without nose pocket
	Fins – All	Paddle blade, Split blade, full foot, heel strap, other configurations
	Snorkels	Any style
	Snorkel Sets	Sets including at least a mask and snorkel
Exposure Protection	Wetsuits	One-piece, two-piece, separate jackets. Excludes hooded vests
	Drysuits	Any style
	Booties, Gloves & Hoods	For use with wetsuits and any units designed for drysuit use. Includes hooded vests.
Hard Goods	Regulators	Includes 1st and 2nd stage sets, Octopus or Alternate Air Sources and breathable inflators not attached to BCs.
	BCs – All	All except technical diving wings and plates. Includes snorkeling vests.
	Technical-related	Side-mount harnesses, tec “wings” and tec back plates
	Computers	All – wrist, hose/console mount
	Analog Gauges	Depth and pressure. Excludes watches and timing devices
Accessories and Bags	Accessories	Clips, anti-fog, fin straps, mask straps, dive flags, tools, reels, mouthpieces, logbooks, slates, etc.
	Bags	All dive gear bags, rucksacks, backpacks, dive-related, mask or other accessory bags

How is the Index Calculated?

Using the same approach as the traditional Purchasing Manager's Index (PMI) the DEMA MPI is calculated as follows: $MPI = (P1 * 1) + (P2 * 0.5) + (P3 * 0)$, Where:

P1 = percentage of answers reporting an improvement

P2 = percentage of answers reporting no change

P3 = percentage of answers reporting a deterioration

The proposed MPI is a percentage from 0 to 100 and is reported quarterly. An MPI above 50 percent indicates an expansion of new orders or inventories, as compared with the previous quarter. An MPI reading under 50 percent indicates a contraction, and a reading at 50 percent indicates no change. The further from 50 percent (in either direction) the greater the level of change has occurred in the reporting period.

Example:

Assumes 10 Manufacturers report quarterly to MPI, in the Category of REGULATORS.

- *6 report an increase in new orders of regulators (P1)*
- *2 report no change from last quarter in new orders of regulators (P2)*
- *2 report a decrease in new orders of regulators (P3)*

Solution:

$$MPI = (P1 * 1) + (P2 * 0.5) + (P3 * 0)$$

$$MPI = (60\% * 1) + (20\% * 0.5) + (20\% * 0) = 70\%.$$

Since this MPI is above 50% for the quarter, it indicates a net positive quarterly growth for new orders of regulators from the reporting Manufacturers.

Once aggregated by the TPA, data becomes available to the industry in table format.

Data Availability

Data is now available to members in various ways, including for those participating and those not participating. As required by law, data is also available to non-members at non-member pricing. Data can be obtained from the DEMA Store. Equipment Category Reports are free to members and available at non-member rates for others. Equipment Type Reports, which are more detailed, are available to Members at Member pricing, while others can obtain Equipment Type Reports at non-member pricing.

- [Equipment Type Report](#)
- [Equipment Category Reports](#)

No equipment-intensive recreation can operate for long without having access to manufacturing data. It should be obvious that this information is critical to growing the industry. DEMA and the Research and Manufacturing Committees look forward to reporting this data into 2025. ■



INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

PETER SYMES, CHAIR

DEMA's continuing mission is "Bringing businesses together to grow the Diving Industry worldwide." With a "global" or "international" expansion in mind, DEMA formed a volunteer Committee in 2021 to evaluate how it might grow international membership and participation in DEMA Show.

In 2024 the DEMA International Membership Committee consisted of Jenny Collister, Reef and Rainforest Travel; Derik Crotts, Professional Scuba Schools; Terry Cummins, Terry Cummins International Business Consulting; Bill Doran, Scuba Educators International; Cassandra Johnson, Breezeway Bubbles Scuba; Dan Orr, Dan Orr Consulting; Arlindo Serrao, Dive Portugal; Peter Symes, X-Ray Dive Magazine (Chair); and Steve Weaver, Dream Weaver Travel.

This Committee seeks to increase the number of International DEMA Members. Most international members join DEMA in connection with DEMA Show, but DEMA has many more offerings beyond the Show that can be valuable during the rest of the year. Still, the Show is a main attraction for international participants and DEMA does encourage the use of this benefit for all members of the professional diving community.

WHERE TO BEGIN?

Like any marketing effort, the first step in growing the number of international members is to understand DEMA's current international member data. The Committee used a Committee-approved "Analysis Framework" to decide which country to target for DEMA's international growth. By selecting one geographic location on which to

focus DEMA's limited resources, the Committee envisioned being able to reach a greater number of companies/buyers in that single location, while gaining a better understanding of the process required to target other international locations.

The Analysis Framework first determined the importance of relevant topic areas, and then analyzed current DEMA show attendees and exhibitors against these topics. The priority order of topics included (1=most important consideration, 16=least important):

1. Percentage of DEMA Show Buyers/ Distributors from a potential target country
2. How will U.S. members benefit from targeting a given country?
3. Percentage of the diving industry represented by the targeted country.
4. Percent of DEMA Members from target country at DEMA Show
5. Potential Market Share in the Country
6. Percentage of DEMA's Revenue coming from the targeted country
7. Can DEMA deliver current benefits to the target country?
8. Are there counterpart associations in the target country?
9. Competition with current members from international companies that join DEMA.
10. Does DEMA have good relationships with those in the target country?
11. Do industry members in the target country have an interest in partnering with DEMA?
12. Regulatory and Standards differences in recreational diving.
13. Cost of providing benefits outside the country.
14. How are products sold (e.g., are there regulatory differences in internet v in-person?).

15. How is information disseminated - are there significant differences with current structure?

16. Do benchmarks exist in the target country?

In addition, the Committee reviewed other considerations, including:

- Diving Community Considerations - using the relationship aspects of recreational diving to help build the audience.
- Building Diving Relationships – understanding how the diving community works in the target location.
- Financial and Governance Considerations – is there a business reason for DEMA to target a given location outside of the U.S.?
- Return on Investment for targeting the international location – what are the reasons DEMA should target a given location?
For example:
 - To grow the diving industry there
 - To bring more diving business to DEMA members in the US and elsewhere
 - To increase DEMA membership – this is a key goal of this Committee.
 - To share/exchange operational information and practices.
- Identify risk factors of targeting a given location
- Determine the financial resources needed for expanded efforts.
- Develop metrics by which to measure success.
- Gain a greater understanding of potential association-related governance issues

In the final analysis the Committee determined that the primary targeting effort would be toward Canada, with a secondary effort aimed at developing additional show-related opportunities in other areas of the world.

As an initial effort, DEMA targeted dive professionals in Canada using an engagement and member spotlight tool called “Dive Pros of Canada.”

Dive Pros is a preliminary program that involved providing an opportunity to showcase current DEMA Members from Canada to the remainder of the DEMA and Diving Communities.

Using this [member spotlight](#), Dive Pros residing and working in Canada provide information about their business and themselves, to help all DEMA members get to know these individuals and their operations. Information includes:

- How many years has the operation been in business?
- How long has the individual personally been involved with the dive industry?
- How does your business promote local diving within your community?
- How does your business promote travel?
- How did you get to where you are in your career/business, and what some key moments or challenges were along the way?
- What are your three most significant business challenges right now?



By engaging in this way DEMA is taking the first steps toward bringing in more members on an international basis. In addition, by conducting international outreach connected to DEMA Show, DEMA hopes to jump-start additional member engagement from outside the U.S.

Dive Pros of Canada is a good start, and this Committee will continue this and other efforts into 2025. ■





2024 DIVING COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS AWARD

CELEBRATING DEMA MEMBERS THAT UPLIFT THEIR COMMUNITY THROUGH UNIQUE DIVING PROGRAMS

The Diving Equipment and Marketing Association is eager to recognize DEMA-member companies that utilize their recreational diving businesses and positions in the community to make a difference locally or on a broader scale. DEMA has created the Diving Community Champions Award for this purpose.

The Platinum, Gold, and Silver Diving Community Champion Awards are provided to the top three nominated DEMA-member companies as voted by the DEMA membership. The Awards are presented each year at DEMA Show and, when publicized to professionals and consumers, help generate public interest in recreational diving by demonstrating that diving can make a difference to communities everywhere. DEMA-member companies from all stakeholder groups have been engaging

with others to help one another locally or even globally, using a variety of activities, and we are honored to recognize these efforts! Through social media and other means, DEMA makes a point of letting the entire diving industry and viewing public know about these company-wide efforts!

DEMA congratulates the 2024 Diving Community Champion Award finalists:

- [DIVEHEART FOUNDATION](#)
- [Jack's Diving Locker](#)
- [Professional Scuba Inspectors, Inc.](#)

The Platinum, Gold, and Silver award winners will be announced during the 2024 DEMA Member Update and Annual Meeting, which will take place on Wednesday, November 20th, from 8:30 to 9:45 a.m. in Room S233 at DEMA Show 2024 in Las Vegas, NV. ■

2024 WAVE MAKERS AWARD

RECOGNIZING NEW DIVE INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The Wave Makers Award aims to recognize new professionals who have worked in the industry for five years or less and have made a significant contribution to the industry during that time.



Wave Makers are employees or owners of DEMA-Member businesses who have been involved as professionals in the Diving Industry for 60 months or less and who should be recognized for their contributions to the industry, a dive business, and DEMA. Nominations must be submitted by employees/owners of a current DEMA member company (self-nominations are not accepted). Member professionals who have been active with DEMA by attending DEMA Show, serving on a committee or task force, or doing other activities related to DEMA can qualify. The Wave Makers Award recognizes the top individual as voted by the DEMA membership.

DEMA congratulates the 2024 Wave Makers Award finalists:

- Britain Cline, Cline Group Advertising | Scuba Diving Industry Magazine
- Victoria Gonzalez, NAUI
- Colin Morgan, Pura Vida Divers

The 2024 Wave Makers Award recipient will be announced during the 2024 DEMA Member Update and Annual Meeting, which will be held on Wednesday, November 20th, from 8:30 to 9:45 a.m. in Room S233 at DEMA Show 2024 in Las Vegas, NV. ■



THE DIVING EQUIPMENT & MARKETING ASSOCIATION

Phone: (858) 616-6408 | Toll Free: (800) 862-DIVE | Fax: (858) 616-6495
info@dema.org | DEMA.org | DEMAShow.com | GoDiveNow.com