

Pushing for positive changes in Phuket yacht charter industry

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Tourism Minister Kobkarn is pushing hard to achieve positive changes in the [Phuket yacht charter](#) industry. A special task force has been formed, supposed to prepare suggestions for changes to visas and [superyacht charter](#) regulations, with deadline by 2016. Gordon Fernandes and Captain Charlie Dwyer of [Asia Pacific Superyachts](#) have proudly shared updated news below of changing regulations for Superyachts, released in the Phuket Gazette newspaper earlier this month.



Superyachts in the fabulous Phuket yacht charter location, nestled in Thailand – Photo by Asia Pacific Superyachts

As mentioned by Ms Kobkarn during an exclusive interview for Phuket Gazette: *“The task force comprises officials from relevant government agencies, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Tourism and Sports and the Immigration Bureau. We are working together to come up with suggestions for changes to visas and other regulations that would be best for the country,” she said. “This includes changes that will boost the chartering of foreign-flagged superyachts in Thai waters. Prime Minister Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha has pledged his full support for bureaucratic changes to help boost marine tourism,” Ms Kobkarn added. “Minister Prajin confirmed that he had met with PM Prayut, who he said pledged his full support for improving all aspects of marine tourism, including yacht and superyacht charters.”*



Ms Kobkarn said she could not unveil any more details as any proposed changes had yet to be finalized. *“This is an important issue, as any changes will affect different types of visas and businesses. We must also consider internal security and safety measures a top priority, but I will support the changes suggested because it means a lot for tourism,” she said. “We hope to have new rules in place by the end of this year to help secure the island’s position as the top yachting destination in the region.”*

These changes are aimed to help boost marine tourism in the fabulous [Thailand yacht charter](#) location – Phuket, including the push for a multi-million-baht harbor expansion at the Deep Sea Port at Ao Makham, as well as the expansion project plans to improve connectivity with other major tourist cruise line ports in the region, such as Singapore and Vietnam.

Ms Kobkarn added: *“Current regulations allow only one-year concessions to operate ports, but we are looking at what can be done to allow long-term concessions,” she said. “We are looking at becoming attractive hosts for yachts, cruise liners and superyachts – all for long-stay, not just short stays. This is what we aim to do and I hope to have a clear picture set by the end of the year.”*