

March 19, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Republican Leader, U.S. House of  
Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Chairwoman, House Committee on  
Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member, House Committee on  
Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter DeFazio  
Chairman, House Committee on Transportation  
and Infrastructure  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sam Graves  
Ranking Member, House Committee on  
Transportation and Infrastructure  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Granger, Chairman DeFazio, and Ranking Member Graves:

As you consider a stimulus package for organizations and industries adversely impacted by the unprecedented spread of the COVID-19, we urge you to include relief for the public seaports in Florida.

Cruise lines pay many fees to ports for costs related to such services as berthing, security, customs and immigration, and other logistical services, and to local harbor pilots. In addition, the cruise lines pay ports for services related to passenger embarkment. Most of these obligations are typically calculated on a per passenger/vessel basis, and the cruise lines spread the expense across a ship's total number of passengers transiting port facilities.

As the hub of cruise line activity in the United States and home to the top three cruise ports in the world, PortMiami, Port Canaveral and Port Everglades, Florida would experience a devastating loss without this economic stream from its seaports. For example, at PortMiami alone, which is widely recognized as the "Cruise Capital of the World," the cruise industry accounts for more than 60 percent of the port's income and is a major contributor to South Florida's economy.

Cruise activity at Florida ports supports 154,646 jobs, with direct expenditures generating \$7.69 billion in wages and salaries. Maritime activities account for approximately 13 percent of Florida's gross domestic product while contributing \$4.2 billion in state and local taxes. This mighty economic engine is at great risk as a result of the swift and drastic decline in cruise business at our ports.

Based on our initial review, Florida ports will lose at least \$198 million in service fees and other cruise-related revenues over a six-month period. The cessation of cruises will halt these revenue streams and also impact hundreds of workers who support these vessels. Obviously, this impact is felt by other U.S. seaports with cruise activity around the country, including Alaska, Washington, Louisiana, California, Texas, New York/New Jersey, South Carolina, Maine, Alabama, and Virginia. We must act to offset these impacts on all of the nation's cruise ports.

We are recommending the inclusion of at least \$1 billion to mitigate the impact of the loss of cruise ship revenues. Florida ports should be expected to use a portion of these funds to compensate port employees who may be furloughed due to the disruption of cruises.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to working with you to ensure that any COVID-19 relief package provides much-needed support to the public seaports in Florida and the rest of the nation.

Sincerely,