

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 5, 2021

The Honorable Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GQ 30329

Mr. Jeffrey Zients
White House COVID Coordinator
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Director Walensky & Mr. Zients:

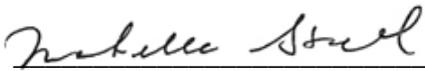
Like many Americans, we are greatly encouraged by the improving public health conditions and expanded access to vaccines that will allow our country to emerge from the pandemic and return to a sense of normalcy. We are also optimistic about the forthcoming economic recovery that will be experienced by many workers and businesses in our districts. However, as Members of Congress who represent constituents that rely on the cruise industry for their livelihoods, we are also mindful that there is not yet a clear path to reopening this important sector.

California is among the nation's largest cruise markets. In 2019, the cruise industry in California accounted for 1.3 million passenger embarkations, generating \$2.6 billion in direct spending and more than 50,000 jobs. Since the onset on the cruise suspension in March 2020, our state has lost \$1.86 billion in direct spending and more than 40,000 jobs related to the cruise industry. The financial impact is felt across our districts, affecting our constituents who are hotel, restaurant, retail workers, longshoremen, transportation operators, and other small- and medium-sized business owners who continue to suffer from the ongoing cruise industry shutdown.

While cruise ships remain idle in the United States, in other parts of the world, cruises have resumed using comprehensive, science-based protocols that have been informed by leading experts, with far lower incident rates than on land. These sailings began prior to the approval and distribution of vaccines and have proven successful in mitigating the risks of COVID-19 for nearly 400,000 passengers. As long as protocols are in place to protect our communities and passengers, we believe the cruise industry in the United States should also be able to resume operations in line with all other sectors.

We are encouraged that the Administration, including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have expressed that a resumption of U.S. cruise operations is feasible by July, and we are hopeful that the current pace of discussions will continue given the progress and advances that the industry has made as it relates to enhanced health and safety measures. These strides, combined with achievements made in confronting the pandemic and the improving public health conditions in California and around the United States, leave us confident that cruises can sail safely from our nation's ports again very soon. We ask that your team continue to constructively engage with the cruise industry, so that our constituents can return to their jobs and support their families.

Sincerely,



Michelle Steel
Member of Congress



Darrell Issa
Member of Congress



Ken Calvert
Member of Congress