



**COMMISSION
AGENDA MEMORANDUM**

Item No. 8h

ACTION ITEM

Date of Meeting March 22, 2022

DATE: March 3, 2021

TO: Stephen P. Metruck, Executive Director

FROM: Stephanie Jones Stebbins, Managing Director, Maritime
Marie Ellingson, Cruise Operations & Business Development Manager

SUBJECT: Port Agreements Under Center for Disease Control's COVID-19 Program for Cruise Ships

Amount of this request: \$0

Total estimated project cost: \$0

ACTION REQUESTED

Request Commission authorization for the Executive Director to finalize and sign Port Agreements under CDC's COVID-19 Program for Cruise Ships and amend leases relating to Port cruise facilities to incorporate such Port Agreements.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The cruise industry COVID-19 protocols incorporate testing, vaccination, screening, sanitation, enhanced ventilation, mask-wearing, physical distancing, and other proven public health measures. These protocols were part of CDC's Framework for Conditional Sailing Order that facilitated the safe return to sailing in 2021. The port's 2021 cruise season saw over 113,300 disembarking passengers in Seattle. Of those 113,300 passengers, 77 disembarked having tested positive for COVID, a per capita rate considerably lower than King County during that period. The safe return of cruising to Seattle helped contribute to the economic recovery from the pandemic.

Since the CDC updated its voluntary COVID-19 Program for Cruise Ships, Port staff have been working diligently with cruise lines, the Washington Department of Health and Public Health Seattle King County. Our efforts are focused on fulfilling the Port's commitment to protect the health and safety of the community, cruise passengers, crew and others associated with the cruise operations.

These Port Agreements will generally cover protections to prevent the spread of COVID onto the vessels and into the community. However, in the event of an on-board infection does occur, the

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agreements require pre-planning measures to address such an outbreak. More specifically the agreements will cover actions by the cruise line to provide transportation, quarantine and hospitalization of affected crew and passengers. The agreements also will detail the Port's responsibilities, which will include the duties of our Cruise Terminal Manager (CTA).

We are aiming to complete these agreements prior to the first scheduled sailings of Cruise ships in April.

As summary of the elements that will be included in the agreements are provided below.

JUSTIFICATION

CDC Program

Cruise ship operators have voluntarily chosen to opt-in to CDC's COVID-19 Program for Cruise Ships. Port Staff is working towards a template agreement that will be substantially similar across Cruise lines, although each Cruise Line would have a separate Port Agreement.

These agreements will include and cover the following elements:

- The total number of ships (including maximum number of passengers and crew) permitted to operate and jointly consider the number of ships that can safely operate at any one time without exceeding the ability of local public health, port authority, hospital, and other emergency response personnel to respond to an onboard outbreak of COVID-19.
- Requirements for reporting of cases identified during a voyage, including thresholds for reporting, timelines, reporting mechanisms, and points of contact.
- The agreements will include a port operations component, a medical care plan component, and a housing component addressing the CDC guidance, which will include:
 - Embarkation procedures that the cruise ship operator intends to use during passenger voyages.
 - Procedures for day-of-embarkation health screening, laboratory testing of travelers and management of close contacts.
 - Emergency response plans in the event of a “worst case” scenario of multiple ships experiencing simultaneous outbreaks of COVID-19.
 - Protocols for contacting emergency medical services while at port for exigent circumstances not covered by the hospital component of the agreement (e.g., a medical emergency not related to COVID-19, such as a heart attack).
 - Protocols that avoid medical evacuations at sea to the greatest extent possible.
 - Disembarkation procedures that will be implemented in the event of an outbreak of COVID-19, and that the cruise ship operator intends to use during passenger voyages.
 - Procedures for informing port personnel who are expected to interact with travelers (passengers and/or crew) of the risks of COVID-19 and how to prevent exposure.

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- Routine and outbreak-level cleaning procedures for areas where travelers are reasonably expected to gather or otherwise make use of, including terminals and restrooms. The agreement must also include routine and outbreak-level cleaning procedures for transportation vehicles under a cruise ship operator’s control (e.g., buses, shuttle vans).
- Medical care arrangements addressing evacuation and medical transport to onshore hospitals for passengers or crew in need of care in accordance with CDC technical instructions.
- Provide for the emergency medical transportation of critically ill persons with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 from the ship to a shoreside medical facility in such a manner as to minimize potential for exposure.
- Arrangements with a shoreside medical facility or healthcare system or multiple shoreside medical facilities or healthcare systems with redundant capacities to ensure that travelers receive appropriate clinical evaluation, including testing, and medical care when needed.
- Incorporate housing arrangements for isolation and quarantine of persons with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and close contacts, respectively, identified from the day of embarkation through disembarkation for each voyage, in accordance with CDC guidance.
- Arrangements in sufficient quantities to meet the transportation needs of all travelers from the ship to the shoreside housing facilities and from the shoreside housing facility to the medical facilities or healthcare systems if needed with precautions in place to avoid exposure of vehicle operators.

Background and full details of what should be included in Port Agreements is presented in the CDC’s guidance linked below:

Diversity in Contracting

Not Applicable.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS While there remains uncertainty, currently our forecasted revenue for the year is \$28.8M. This is a realistic, if not conservative, estimate.

ATTACHMENTS TO THIS BRIEFING

- (1) CDC COVID-19 Program for Cruise Ships Technical Instructions Port Agreements

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS

June 08, 2021 – Commission authorized the Executive Director to finalize and sign Port Agreements under CDC’s Framework for Conditional Sailing Order and amend leases relating to Port cruise facilities to incorporate such Port Agreements.