

John E Wells, Jr
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Dear Mayor and City Commissioners:

31 March 2022

Upon reading the proposed Operating and Settlement Agreement between the City and Pier B Development Corporation, my first thought is to commend and thank both parties and the negotiation participants for all the hard work and hours that obviously were required to produce this document. I endorse the approval and signing of this Agreement.

As you all know, I have been outspoken in my criticism of the Commission and Mayor regarding the cruise ship referenda and their application to City policy. I still believe the Commission's handling of the issue was regrettably founded on misinformation and ignorance of maritime industry operations and its long-term positive impact on the City treasury and economy. Not once did any of you reach out to anyone in the Key West maritime community to inform yourselves of cruise ship operations in the Key West. You disregarded the decades of safe and clean cruise ship operations which provided significant revenues to the City treasury thus providing relief to overburdened taxpayers. Rather, you chose to follow the agenda of a small group of radicals bent on destroying our industry and businesses. Your justification of following the "will of the people" was a political excuse that ignored the historical fact that the people's will has sometimes brought pain and suffering to millions. A role of government is to protect the minority from the tyranny of the majority – especially when the 'majority' is misled by misinformation and falsehoods.

Nevertheless, you have now chosen to follow a path to a negotiated settlement that will partially restore operations to our port. This Agreement is a pathway to heal the community, put people back to work, restore business operations and assure revenue for the City treasury. I commend and thank you all for your leadership in this regard.

As a final comment, I deplore your passage of the Resolution that effectively closed Mallory Pier. The closure of our oldest historical dock facility is a disappointing mistake that will cause further problems for the City in the future. The very few *small* ships (19 in the next 33 months) that are scheduled to berth at Mallory will now have to be cancelled at your order. They are all small, well-regarded, upscale vessels carrying a few hundred passengers. I would be happy to speak with you to discuss the actual ramifications of accommodating these small ships at Mallory, even on days when there is a ship at Pier B.

Again, thank you all for initiating the process that produced the proposed Operating and Settlement Agreement with Pier B Corporation. It is a much needed first step in repairing our community. I urge you all to approve the Agreement.

Sincerely,

John E Wells, Jr
Ships' Agent