Caribe Nautical

Ships' Agents

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TO: Mayor DeeDee Henriquez, Key West City Commission

FM: John Wells, Ships' Agent

RE: Statement on Discharge of Pollutants into Key West Waters

DATE: 22 July 2025

Dear Mayor Henriquez and City Commissioners:

Pertaining to the upcoming City Commission meeting scheduled for 23 July 2025, I wish to comment on the discussion pertaining to the Discharge of Pollutants from cruise ships in Key West waters. In short, it has never happened. As Chairman of Caribe Nautical Services, a Ships' Agency that has attended cruise ships in the Port of Key West since 1981, I can report that there has never been a discharge of pollutants in Key West.

The maritime industry in general and the cruise industry in particular operate under stringent rules, regulations and guidelines regarding water pollution. All of those regulations are listed in the City's Cruise Ship Regulations (Chapter 80). They include the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, the International Convention on Prevention of Pollution from Ships and the International Convention for Safety of Life at Sea.

Caribe Nautical agents board each and every arriving cruise ship. Among our many duties we ensure that all Certificates pertaining to the above regulations are in force and up to date. This is a requirement set forth by US Customs and Border Protection.

In the event of an unauthorized discharge into Key West waters, both the ship's staff and our office would immediately notify multiple organizations as well as the local US Coast Guard Captain of the Port. Responsibility for evaluation, investigation and direction of any mitigation efforts rests with the Coast Guard and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

I offer these observations to reassure you of the high standards of maritime and environmental safety implemented on every ship entering Key West waters. Efforts by some to disparage cruise ship operators in Key West must be measured against the reality that every ship is staffed and crewed by highly qualified and experienced maritime professionals and the fact that we have never experienced a spill or discharge of pollutants in Key West.

Mote Marine has proposed to provide water quality monitoring for the City of Key West and was the highest ranked proposer and the lowest price. Your unbiased staff ranked Mote Marine first. Trust the process. Trust that a longstanding not-for-profit marine laboratory with scientists dedicated to help save the oceans will accurately report water quality to the City of Key West.

It is in the interests of the cruise ship industry to protect and ensure long-term environmental quality within their destination ports and the communities they are a part of.

Thank you and Best regards,

John E Wells

JOHN E WELLS
Chairman