



The Official Tourism Marketing Corporation for the State of Florida



Dear Mr. Cates,

On behalf of VISIT FLORIDA and the entire Florida tourism industry, I'd like to respectfully request that the Port of Key West officially be declared as open for business effective immediately.

As you know, Florida's 14 seaports are critical to our state's economy, generating over \$117 billion in economic value. Half of those are ports of call for cruise ships, which support over 138,000 jobs in our state. The Port of Key West plays an important role, bringing in nearly 1 million passengers annually with an economic impact of \$85,000,000.

People from all across the world experience Florida on a cruise, many of them for the first time. The seven cruise ports across our state allow us to showcase Florida's sunshine, blue skies and exciting destinations to visitors traveling from all across the world, and the Port of Key West is no exception. As the southernmost port in one of the most exciting destinations in the world, the Port of Key West is often our state's first impression on visitors. Having it bustling, vibrant and open for business again as quickly as possible is crucial to our success as an industry.

We are aware that the first cruise ship docked at the port last week. However, we feel that a strong statement from you affirming that the Port is open for business to travelers all across the world will be beneficial to Key West, VISIT FLORIDA, and our entire state.

If there is anything further I can do to be of assistance in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

For Florida,

Ken Lawson