

8/21/2023

City of Santa Barbara Harbor Commission
735 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA, 93101

RE: Santa Barbara Cruise Ship Program

Dear Cruise Ship Subcommittee Members:

The Santa Barbara South Coast Chamber of Commerce, representing businesses from Goleta to Carpinteria, would like to express our support for the Santa Barbara Cruise Ship Program and Cruise Ship visits. One primary focus of the Chamber is the continued economic development and success of our regions, and to continue to make the South Coast a place where our local businesses and community members can thrive. The Santa Barbara Cruise Ship program is an important part of that success. The Chamber would like to continue to stress that the direct economic impact of cruise ships to Santa Barbara is supported by studies that show they generate \$4 million+ in economic benefits to the city annually.

The Chamber plays a key role in convening local businesses, the Waterfront, and cruise lines to increase the awareness of, and accessibility to, the economic benefits of cruise ship visits. We are a key partner to local businesses, the Waterfront, and cruise lines in these efforts, and continue to provide existing work in this area through Ruairi Bateson our Visitors Center Manager, our Visitor Center staff, our volunteers, Laurie Barene – Visitor Center Advertising, and Cheyenne Brooks – Tourism and Communications. The Chamber is in close contact with our member businesses, which we promote to cruise ship visitors, guaranteeing that the goods and services we highlight to visitors are relevant and available.

This relationship with businesses gives us a unique insight into the business benefits of cruise ships. The Chamber has never received comments or concerns from a business stating that cruise ship visits have negatively impacted their business. In fact, the anecdotal evidence and the data from the economic benefits study support that cruise ship visitors visit and support our local businesses. Many hotels share that cruise ship visitors stop in to gain information on the hotel and the area, and plan for future visits. We cannot take the indirect impacts of cruise ships for granted. A large piece of Santa Barbara's economic success is built on its brand as a desirable destination. Being known as a cruise ship destination is an important part of that reputation. Not to mention the simple word of mouth from passengers encouraging others to visit our great City or planning extended return visits.

Regarding the environmental concerns related to cruise ships – these concerns should not be taken lightly, and it is important that we continue to ensure that cruise ships continue to act in good faith. It is also important that we understand the current Federal and State regulations surrounding cruise ships before we take any actions that may cause regulatory inconsistency or lead to duplicative efforts. Our experience with the cruise ship industry is that they are committed to being good partners to the City and to businesses. Changes to the Cruise Ship Program that may or may not be consistent with Federal and State regulations should not be necessary while the cruise ships are expressing a willingness to work with the City to address any environmental concerns that may be raised by the community.



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Visitor Center: 120 State Street, Santa Barbara, CA

We must also continue to acknowledge the important economic benefits cruise ships offer, as well as the businesses whose livelihood they support, when considering future actions.

Thank you for your support of the continued success of Santa Barbara's cruise ship program, which plays an important role in the economic success and reputation of Santa Barbara.

Sincerely,

Kristen Miller
President & CEO
Santa Barbara South Coast Chamber of Commerce